# D'AULNOY'S FAIRY TALES

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FAIRY TALES
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# CONTENTS


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| PREFACE | vii |
| INTRODUCTION | x |
| GRACIEUSE AND PERCINET | 1 |
| THE FAIR WITH GOLDEN HAIR | 19 |
| THE BLUE BIRD | 30 |
| PRINCE SPRITE | 57 |
| PRINCESS PRINTANIERE | 83 |
| PRINCESS ROSETTE | 98 |
| THE GOLDEN BRANCH | 110 |
| THE BEE AND THE ORANGE TREE | 134 |
| THE GOOD LITTLE MOUSE | 153 |
| THE RAM | 162 |
| FINETTE CENDRON | 174 |
| FORTUNÉE | 189 |
| BABIOLE | 198 |
| THE YELLOW DWARF | 216 |
| GREEN SERPENT | 232 |
| THE PRINCESS CARPILLON | 254 |
| THE BENEFICENT FROG | 285 |
| THE HIND IN THE WOOD | 303 |
| THE WHITE CAT | 329 |
| BELLE BELLE; OR, THE CHEVALIER FORTUNE | 358 |
| THE PIGEON AND THE DOVE | 390 |
| PRINCESS BELLE-ETOILE AND PRINCE CHERI | 422 |


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# COLORED ILLUSTRATIONS

FACING PAGE

SOMEBODY MUST HAVE STOLEN MY GOOD WINE AND PUT IN ITS PLACE THESE TRIFLES ..... 1

SHE OPENED THE BOX AND IMMEDIATELY OUT CAME A QUANTITY OF LITTLE MEN ..... 16

HE PERCEIVED A HORRIBLE ROCK, AS BLACK AS INK, AND THE NEXT MINUTE ONE OF THE DRAGONS CASTING OUT FIRE FROM HIS MOUTH ..... 26

HE RECOGNIZED IN HER THE SAME BEING WHOSE BEAUTY HE HAD ADMIRED IN THE GALLY ..... 122

SHE WENT TO THE SEASHORE LADEN WITH EVERYTHING OF THE BEST ..... 138

I KNOW YOU WELL QUEEN, AND I KNOW THE FEAR YOU ARE IN ..... 216

IN PASSING NEAR A WOOD THERE CAME OUT OF IT A HORRIBLE GIANT ..... 292

SHE LOOKED IN THE BOOK THAT TELLS EVERYTHING, AND SHE INSTANTLY KNEW THAT PRINCE GUERRIER HAD ABANDONED THE BLACK PRINCESS FOR THE PRINCESS DÉSIRÉE ..... 312

# *PREFACE*

THE Fairy Tales of the Countess d'Aulnoy, after having delighted old and young for nearly two hundred years, are now, strange to say, for the first time presented to the English reader in their integrity.

This assertion may appear startling to those who are familiar with many English versions of the most popular of them; but it is, nevertheless, a fact, as the examination of this little volume will prove.

Early in the last century, three volumes of Fairy Tales were published, under the title of "A Collection of Novels and Tales of the Fairies, written by that celebrated wit of France, the Countess d'Anois, translated from the best edition of the original French, by several hands." And in 1817 the same collection reappeared in two small volumes, with a new preface, and entitled, "Fairy Tales, translated from the French of the Countess d'Anois." Now, it will scarcely be believed that, although the collector introduced the novels which link the second series of her Fairy Tales together, after the fashion of the old Italian novelists, they not only omitted the Whole of the first series, but also several of the best of the second; substituting, in the place of the latter, tales by the Countess de Murat, and the Countess d'Auneuil, without distinction or explanation, changing the titles where they occurred in the intermediate narrative, and altering or wholly omitting the remarks made upon them by the personages for whose entertainment they are supposed to be related, so that the reader could not suspect the imposition that was practised upon him, for what reason it is difficult to imagine.

Nor was the injustice to the author limited to this snigular caprice. The tales, instead of being faithfully translated, were recklessly abridged and loosely paraphrased; while the incidental couplets occasionally, and the versified morals invariably, were dispensed with altogether.

Other abridgments and paraphrases of a few of these stories have appeared in sundry juvenile publications; and, in a very recent one, the rising generation was presented with "Babiole," "Princess Rosette," "Princess Printaniere" (called "Princess Maia"), "The Beneficent Frog," and "The Good Little Mouse"; but still abridged, and adapted to the atmosphere of the nursery. I beg to disclaim any intention of depreciating these latter productions, which are avowedly addressed to the youngest class of readers; but the first was a literary fraud, which cannot be too severely denounced, whether it be regarded as an imposition on the public or an injustice to the original author. And yet the writer of the Preface to the fifth edition (London, 1766) says, "I shall not pretend to say anything in commendation of the translators, only that they have kept up to the sense and spirit of the author, whose thoughts are so elegant and refined, *their beauties would have been lost in a paraphrase.*" Is it possible that this person could

have been acquainted with "the best edition of the original French," from which he professes this translation was made? I must, in charity, hope not, and imagine that he was himself deceived by the "several hands" who perpetrated the extraordinary concoction in which "The Palace of Revenge," "Anguilletta," "Young and Handsome," and "Perfect Love," by the Countess de Murat, take the places of "Fortunée," "Babiole," "Serpentin Vert," "Prince Marcassin," and "Le Dauphin"; while "The Knights-Errant," and "The Tyranny of the Fairies Destroyed," by the Countess d'Auneuil, are thrown in, I presume, to compound for the omission of "La Biche au Bois," "La Grenouille Bienfaisante," and the nine stories contained in the "Contes des Fées" of Madame d'Aulnoy.

The volume now presented to the public, whatever may be its demerits, contains at any rate nothing that is not the composition of the Countess d'Aulnoy. The omissions consist of, first, the novels with which the second series of her Fairy Tales, entitled, "Les Fées a la Mode," were interlarded, possessing little interest in themselves, and unnecessary as vehicles for the sprightly and ingenious stories they introduce; and, secondly, of the two concluding tales, "Prince Marcassin," and "Le Dauphin," which, though not wanting in merit, as far as fancy and humour are concerned, could not, without considerable alterations in their details, have been rendered unobjectionable to the English reader.

Had not the many liberties I have taken with the Fairy Tales of Madame d'Aulnoy, in adapting them to the stage, made it a point of conscience with me to adhere as rigidly as possible to the original text on this occasion, I should have been stimulated to it by another circumstance, which evidently had a precisely contrary effect on my predecessors. The numberless allusions to the persons, events, works, manners, and customs of the age in which they were written, were doubtlessly considered incumbrances by those whose only object was to provide amusement for the nursery; and I do not dispute the discretion with which they might have been altered or omitted in abridgments made for that special purpose; but such a plea cannot be put in for the translators of "the best edition of the original French" who professed to give the general English public the works of a "celebrated wit of France," whose "thoughts are so elegant and refined, their beauties would be lost in a paraphrase."

I indulge in the hope that a new interest will be imparted to these old favourites, when they shall be found to be not only amusing fictions, but curious reflections of the Courts of Versailles and Madrid, at the close of the seventeenth century; the dress and manners accurately described, and the pomps and pastimes in many instances scarcely exaggerated. This will be evident, I think, from the foot-notes I have appended, when immediate explanation appeared necessary.

I have only to add here, that while I have endeavoured to render the text as literally as the idioms of the two languages would admit, and spared no pains, where the passage was obscure or the expression obsolete, in attaining the nearest approach in my power to the sense of the author (which has been frequently most ludicrously perverted by the "several hands" aforesaid), I have left the *proper* names of the various personages

untranslated, having come to that determination after much consideration, and in consequence of the great inconsistency and confusion of identity I found had resulted from the attempts to translate them by others.

The incidental verse, and the "moralitiés," as they are called, though unavoidably not so literally rendered as the prose, will, I trust, be found as true to the spirit of the original, and retaining the *colour* of the period in which it was composed—the period of Lulli, in music; and in painting, of Watteau and Parterre.

# INTRODUCTION

THE Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, says the author of "A Discourse on the Origin of Fairy Tales," had frozen every pen. No one dared to write anything for fear of displeasing the king, who had appointed royal censors of the press as substitutes for the Doctors of the Sorbonne, who had themselves superseded the Inquisitors of the Holy Office. But this congelation was merely temporary. Since Madame de Maintenon had arisen from the rank of governess to the children of Madame de Montespan to that of the wife, though not the queen, of Louis XIV., the Court had adopted a tone which had been properly assumed by a pious woman surrounded by legitimate princes still young, and to whom good examples were indispensable. Age, public misfortunes, and the character of his connection with Madame de Maintenon, had brought Louis himself back to the steps of the altar and the calm of private society. Amongst the tutors selected for the princes of the blood were Bossuet and Fénelon. The talent of these justly celebrated men popularised the purest morals, by covering them with flowers, and dressing them in the most pleasing forms. Books for the instruction of princes were eagerly multiplied, a select library was printed of them; it seemed as if the whole nation had determined to purify its gallantry in the crucible of a wise yet infantile morality. At this period there lived a number of women who cultivated letters successfully; others, who esteemed them, wrote and made for themselves a greater or lesser reputation. Amongst this latter class were many of high rank and considerable fortune, great personal beauty, and general amiability. The doors of their magnificent hotels were thrown open to the Muses.

The Romances of Mademoiselle de Scuderi were found to be too long, the character of them too sententious. The Allegorical Romances, the "Argenis" of Barclay, the Cleopatras and Cassandras which the "Polexandre" of Gomberville had introduced, were no longer to be endured. There was a demand for what the Spaniards called an *Entreteniamento*, a narrative occupying not more than ten or a dozen pages instead of as many volumes. Fashion is always running into extremes. The extent of a Fairy Tale satisfied this new caprice. Though principally designed for the amusement of children, the style was so improved, so much more plot was introduced, so much wit and grace imparted to them by successive writers, that they speedily assumed an interest for maturer readers, for the man of the world and the man of imagination. Their freedom from all licentiousness had placed them from their first appearance in the hands of children and of young females, and they were shortly to be found everywhere—on the table of the village pastor and of the sovereign. They were read of an evening by the cottage fireside and in the Chateau de Versailles. Hostile criticism, was not, however, wanting. The Abbé de Villiers undertook to satirise the Fairy Tale; but criticism failed, and the Fairy Tale increased its circulation. The simpler stories of Perrault were succeeded by the more elaborate compositions of the Countesses de Murat, d'Aulnoy, d'Auneuil, and Mademoiselle de la Force. Enjoyed by Madame de Maintenon, they were not disdained by the young courtiers, the Chevaliers de la

Terrasse, who followed Louis XV.: but the Regent was not the man to protect the Fairies, and the Duchesse du Maine, and the roués of the Temple, had no feeling for these "elegant trifles." Had they been only elegant trifles they might not have survived the neglect of fashion, or even the satire of the Abbé de Villiers: but the sterling gold that was in them was indestructible, and imparted to them "a charmed life." To quote the words of one of the most popular writers of the present day, "It would be hard to estimate the amount of gentleness and mercy that has made its way among us through these slight channels. Forbearance, courtesy, consideration for the poor and aged, kind treatment of animals, the love of nature, abhorrence of tyranny and brute force—many such good things have been nourished in the child's heart by this powerful aid. It has greatly helped to keep us ever young, by preserving through our worldly ways one slender track not overgrown with weeds, where we may walk with children, sharing their delights."[1]

Of the four above-mentioned ladies who most successfully followed the lead of Perrault, the Countess d'Aulnoy was the most prolific, and has achieved the greatest popularity. Marie Catherine, daughter of Monsieur le Jumel de Barneville, was born in 1649, and died at Paris in January, 1705. Her father was connected with some of the first families in Normandy.[2] She married François de la Mothe, Comte d'Aulnoy, who was accused of treason by three Normans, imprisoned, and would have lost his head, had not one of his accusers, struck with remorse of conscience, declared the whole charge to be groundless. The Countess herself was at another period compromised through her intimacy with the beautiful Madame Tiquet, who was beheaded on the Place de Grêve, for the murder of her husband. To considerable personal attractions, Madame d'Aulnoy joined much wit and great facility of expression. She was universally popular in society, and possessed to a remarkable extent the talent of combining instruction and amusement in her most ordinary conversation. She had read much, travelled a little, and was gifted with an excellent memory. Whatever might be the subject under discussion, she is said to have always had some information to impart upon it. Nobody could relate an anecdote better or more seasonably, and her facility in composition equalled that evinced in her conversation. She left four daughters, the eldest of whom became Madame de Héere, to whom Monsieur le Président de Vertron addressed the following lines:—

> "Dans la prose et les vers de l'aimable de Héere,
> Je le dis comme je le croi,
> La fille est semblable à la mère,
> On y voit tout l'esprit de l'aimable d'Aulnoy."

The second married Monsieur de Preaux Dantigny, a gentleman of Berry.

The list of her works varies in every account I have seen of them; but in her preface to her "Mémoires de la Cour de France," or, as it is more generally called, "Mémoires Historiques de ce qui s'est passé en Europe depuis 1672 jusqu'en 1679," Madame d'Aulnoy has given us one of her own, with this observation: "I profit by this opportunity to declare to the public, that they have printed in Holland some books in my name which are not mine, I having never written any others than these following:—

| | |
|---|---|
| Hipolite Comte de Duglas. | Jean de Bourbon, Prince de Carency. |
| Les Mémoires de la Cour d'Espagne. | Les Nouvelles Espagnoles. |
| La Relation du Voyage en Espagne. | Une Paraphrase sur le "Miserere." |

Une Paraphrase sur le Pseaume, "*Benedic, anima mea, Domino.*"

[1] Charles Dickens's "Household Words." Saturday, October 1, 1853.
[2] Her mother married secondly the Marquis de Gadaine, and died at Madrid.

To which, of course, we must add the work in which this preface appears, "Mémoires Historiques," or "de la Cour de France," and her "Contes des Fées," and "Fées à la Mode." Other lists contain, in addition to the above, "Mémoires de la Cour d'Angleterre," and "Mémoires du Comte de Warwick," said to have been the last of her compositions, printed in 1703. But of these I cannot find any trace, beyond the mention of them with commendation in the *Mercure Gallant* for January, 1705, which contains an obituary notice of Madame d'Aulnoy. There is also a work in two volumes attributed to her, entitled, "Histoire Chronologique d'Espagne tirée de Mariana, &c." 12mo. Rotterdam, 1694; but this may be one of the publications she complains of. All her works, with the exception of the Fairy Tales, are now excessively rare, both in France and England, though a translation of of "Hipolite" was published in 1741, and of the "Voyage en Espagne," under the title of "Ingenious and diverting Letters of a Lady's Travels into Spain," which had reached its eighth edition in 1717, and was reprinted in two volumes, with corrections (much needed) in 1808.

The publishers of "The Travels" also published a book entitled, "The Diverting Works of the Countess d'Anois, author of the 'Lady's Travels into Spain,'" containing "The Memoirs of her own Life," an absurd fabrication; her Spanish Novels, and the Tales of the Fairies, in three parts, which consist only of "Les Contes des Fées," and a series entitled, "Les Illustres Fées," a collection of very short and inferior tales, which I have not found any authority for attributing to her pen.

Her Fairy Tales consist of two distinct portions, the first, entitled, "Les Contes des Fées," contains—

Gracieuse et Percinet.
La Belle aux Cheveux d'Or.
L'Oiseau Bleu.
Le Prince Lutin.
La Princesse Printanière.
La Princesse Rosette.
Le Rameau d'Or.
L'Oranger et l'Abeille.
La Bonne Petite Souris.

This first series, in two small parts, was dedicated to "Madame," as she was called, the Princess Elizabeth of Bavaria, second wife of Philip, Duke of Orleans.

The second series, entitled, "Les Fées à la Mode, contains—

Le Mouton.
Finette Cendron.
Fortunée.
Babiole.
Le Nain Jaune.
Serpentin Vert.
La Princesse Carpillon.
La Grenouille Bienfaisante.
La Biche au Bois.
La Chatte Blanche.
Belle-Belle, ou le Chevalier Fortuné.
Le Pigeon et la Colombe.
La Princesse Belle-Etoile et le Prince Cheri.
Le Prince Marcassin.
Le Dauphin.

These stories were intermixed with three novels,—"Don Gabriel Ponce de Leon," "Don Ferdinand de Toledo," and "Le Nouveau Gentilhomme Bourgeois," the personages in which were supposed to relate the Fairy Tales for the amusement of each other, as I have previously mentioned. We have no data by which to arrive at any knowledge of the exact chronological order in which these Fairy Tales were written; but I venture to think that, by preserving that in which they are printed in the "Cabinet des Fées," I have not greatly departed from it.

Somebody must have stolen my good wine and
put in its place these trifles.

# D'AULNOY'S FAIRY TALES

## *GRACIEUSE AND PERCINET*

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who had an only daughter. Her beauty, her sweet temper, and her wit, which were incomparable, caused them to name her Gracieuse. She was the sole joy of her mother, who sent her every day a beautiful new dress, either of gold brocade, or of velvet, or of satin. She was always magnificently attired, without being in the least proud, or vain of her fine clothes. She passed the morning in the company of learned persons, who taught her all sorts of sciences, and in the afternoon she worked beside the queen. At luncheon time they served up to her basins full of sugar-plums, and more than twenty pots of preserves; so that she was universally considered the happiest princess in the world!

There was in this same Court an exceedingly rich old maid, called the Duchess Grognon, and who was horrible in every respect. Her hair was as red as fire, her face of an alarming size, covered with pimples; she had but one blear eye left, and her mouth was so large you would have said she could eat everybody up, only, as she had no teeth, people were not afraid of it; she had a hump before and behind, and limped with both legs. Such monsters envy all handsome persons, and consequently she hated Gracieuse mortally, and retired from Court to avoid hearing her praises. She took up her abode in a neighbouring château that belonged to her, and when any one who paid her a visit spoke of the perfections of the princess, she would scream out in a rage, "It is false! it is false! She is not charming! I have more beauty in my little finger than she has in her whole body!"

Now it happened that the queen fell ill and died. The Princess Gracieuse felt as if she should die also of grief for the loss of so good a mother, and the king deeply regretted his excellent wife. For nearly a twelvemonth he remained shut up in his

palace, till at length the physicians, alarmed at the consequence to his health, insisted on his going out and amusing himself.

One day he went hunting, and the heat being very great, he entered a large château that he saw near him, for shelter and refreshment. As soon as the Duchess Grognon (for it was her château) heard of the king's arrival, she hastened to receive him, and informed him that the coolest place in the mansion was a large vaulted cellar, exceedingly clean, into which she requested he would descend. The king followed her, and entering the cellar he saw two hundred barrels placed in rows one above the other.

He asked her whether it was only for herself she kept such a stock. "Yes, Sire," she replied, "for myself alone: but I shall be delighted if your majesty will do me the honour to taste my wines. Here is Canary, Saint Laurent, Champagne, Hermitage, Rivesalte, Rossolis, Persicot, Fenouillet;[1] which do you prefer, Sire?" "Frankly," said the king, "I hold that champagne is worth all the other wines put together." Grognon immediately took a small hammer, struck a cask two or three times, "tap," "tap," and out came a million of pistoles. "What does this mean?" she exclaimed with a smile, and passing to the next cask she bit that, "tap," "tap," and out rolled a bushel of double Louis-d'ors. "I don't understand this at all," she said, smiling still more significantly. On she went to another barrel and rapped "tap" "tap," and out ran so many pearls and diamonds that the floor of the cellar was covered with them. "Ah!" she cried, "I can't comprehend this, Sire. Somebody must have stolen my

[1] Saint Laurent is a wine of Provence, celebrated by Madame de Sévigné in her letters. Rivesalte, a Muscat wine, grown in the vicinity of a small town of that name in Roussillon. Rossolis was a liqueur so called from the plant, Ros Solis, or rosée du soleil (sun dew). It was so great a favourite with Louis XIV. that a particular sort was called Rossolis du Roi. Persicot and Fenouillet, were also liqueurs. The first a sort of noyau, and the other brandy flavoured with fennel; the principal manufactory for which was in the Isle de Rhé.

good wine and put in its place these trifles." "Trifles!" echoed the king, perfectly astonished; "do you call these trifles, Madam? There is treasure enough here to buy ten kingdoms, each as big as Paris!"[1] "Well," said the duchess, "know that these barrels are all filled with gold and jewels, and I will make you master of all, provided you will marry me." "Oh," said the king, who loved money beyond anything, "I desire nothing better!—I'll marry you to-morrow if you please." "But," continued she, "I must make one more condition. I must have the same power over your daughter as her mother had. She must obey my will and pleasure, and you shall leave her entirely to my management." "Agreed," said the king, "there is my hand upon it." Grognon placed her hand in his, and leaving the treasure-vault together, she presented him with the key of it.

The king immediately returned to his palace. Gracieuse, hearing her royal father's voice, ran to meet him, embraced him, and inquired if he had had good sport. "I have taken," said he, "a dove, alive." "Ah, Sir," said the princess, "give it to me, I will feed and make a pet of it." "That may not be," replied the king, "for to speak plainly, I must tell you that I have seen the Duchess Grognon, and that I am going to marry her." "Oh, Heavens!" exclaimed Gracieuse, "can you call her a dove? She is more like a screech-owl!" "Hold your tongue," said the king, becoming angry; "I command you to love and respect her as much as if she were your mother. Go and dress yourself immediately, for I intend to return this very day to meet her." The princess, who was very obedient, went immediately to her dressing-room. Her nurse saw tears in her eyes—"What is the matter, my little darling?" she asked, "you are crying?" "Alas! my dear nurse," answered Gracieuse, "who would not weep? The king is going to give me a stepmother, and to complete my misfortune, she is my most cruel enemy—in one word, the hideous Grognon! How shall I ever bear to see her in the beautiful beds which the queen, my dear mother, so delicately embroidered with her own hands! How can I ever caress a malicious old ape who would have put me to death!" "My dear child," replied the nurse, "you must have a spirit as high and noble as your birth. Princesses like you should set the greatest examples to the world; and what finer example can there be, than that of obedience to a father and sacrificing one's self to please him? Promise me, therefore, that you will not manifest your antipathy to Grognon." The poor princess had much difficulty in summoning up resolution to promise: but the prudent nurse gave her so many excellent reasons, hat at length she pledged her word to put a good face on the matter, and behave

[1] "Dix Royaumes grands comme Paris." I am inclined to think that the word royaumes (kingdoms) was used advisedly in lieu of *villes* (cities), in compliment to the Grand Monarque, and at the expense of the petty princes of Germany and Italy, so continually opposed to him (particularly in the League of Augsburg, 1687), some of whose entire dominions were not much larger than the metropolis of France.

courteously to her stepmother. She then proceeded to dress herself in a gown of green and gold brocade, her long fair hair falling in wavy folds upon her shoulders, and fanned by the passing breezes, as was the fashion in those days, and crowned with a light wreath of roses and jasmine, the leaves of which were made of emeralds. In this attire, Venus, the mother of the loves, would have looked less beautiful, notwithstanding the air of melancholy which she could not altogether banish from her countenance.

But to return to Grognon. The ugly creature was excessively occupied with her toilette. She had one shoe made half a cubit higher in the heel than the other, in order to appear less lame, a bodice stuffed upon one shoulder to conceal the hump on its fellow. A glass eye, the best she could procure, to replace the one she had lost. She painted her brown skin white, dyed her red hair black, and then put on an open robe of amaranth-coloured satin faced with blue, and a yellow petticoat, trimmed with violet ribbon. She determined to make her *entrée* on horseback, because she had heard it was a custom of the queens of Spain.

Whilst the king was giving his orders, and Gracieuse awaiting the moment of departure to meet Grognon, she descended alone into the palace gardens and strolled into a little gloomy grove, where she sat down upon the grass, "At length," she said, "I am at liberty, and may cry as much as I please without any one to check me!" and accordingly she sighed and wept so excessively that her eyes appeared like two fountains in full play. In this sad state she no longer thought of returning to the Palace, when she saw a page approaching dressed in green satin, with a plume of white feathers in his cap and the handsomest countenance in the world. Bending one knee to the ground, he said, "Princess, the king awaits you." She was struck with surprise at the beauty and grace of the young page, and, as he was a stranger to her, she supposed he was in the service of Grognon. "How long is it," said she, "since the king admitted you into the number of his pages?" "I am not the king's page, madam," he replied; "I am yours, and will be yours only." "Mine!" exclaimed Gracieuse, much astonished, "and I not know you!" "Ah, princess!" said he, "hitherto I have not dared to make myself known to you, but the misfortunes with which you are threatened by this marriage of the king oblige me to speak to you sooner than I should have done. I had resolved to leave time and attention to declare to you my passion." "How! a page!" said the princess: "a page has the assurance to tell me he loves me!—This, indeed, completes my degradation!" "Be not alarmed, beautiful Gracieuse," said he, with the most tender and respectful air; "I am Percinet, a prince sufficiently well known for his wealth and his science, to relieve you from all idea of inequality in birth and station. In merit and person I eagerly admit your superiority. I have loved you long; I have been often near you in these gardens without your perceiving me. The fairy power bestowed upon me at my birth

has been of great service in procuring me the pleasure of beholding you. I will accompany you everywhere to-day in this habit, and, I trust, not altogether without being of service to you." The princess gazed at him while he spoke in a state of astonishment from which she could not recover. "It is you, then, handsome Percinet!" said she to him. "It is you whom I have so much wished to see, and of whom such surprising things are related! How delighted I am that you desire to be my friend! I no longer fear the wicked Grognon, since you take an interest in my fortunes." A few more words passed between them, and then Gracieuse repaired to the palace, where she found a horse ready saddled and caparisoned, which Percinet had placed in the stables, and which it was supposed must be intended for her. She mounted it, and, as it was a very spirited animal, the page took the bridle and led it, turning every minute towards the princess that he might have the pleasure of beholding her.

When the horse which had been selected for Grognon appeared beside that of Gracieuse, it looked like a draught jade, and the housings of the beautiful steed so blazed with jewels that those of the other could not be compared to them. The king, who was occupied with a thousand things, took no notice of it; but the nobles had no eyes but for the princess, whose beauty was their admiration, and for her green clad page, who was prettier than all the other Court pages put together.

They met Grognon on the road in an open calèche, looking more ugly and ill-shapen than an old gipsy. The king and the princess embraced her. They led forward her horse, that she might mount, but seeing the one Gracieuse was upon she exclaimed, "How! Is this creature to have a finer horse than I? I had rather never be a queen and return to my precious castle than be treated in this manner!" The king immediately commanded the princess to dismount, and to beg Grognon would do her the honour to ride her horse. The princess obeyed without a murmur. Grognon neither looked at her, nor thanked her. She was hoisted up on the beautiful horse, and looked like a bundle of dirty clothes. Eight gentlemen held her for fear she should fall off. Still she was not satisfied, but muttered threats between her teeth. They inquired what was the matter with her. "The matter is," said she, "that being the mistress, I choose that the green page shall hold the rein of my horse as he did when Gracieuse rode it." The king ordered the green page to lead the queen's horse. Percinet looked at the princess, and she at him without speaking a word. He obeyed, and all the Court set forward, the drums and trumpets making a desperate noise. Grognon was in raptures. Notwithstanding her flat nose and her wry mouth she would not have changed persons with Gracieuse.

But at the moment when they were least thinking of it, lo, and behold, the fine horse began to bound, to rear, and at length ran away at such a pace that no one could stop him. Off he went with Grognon, who held on by the saddle and by the mane, screaming with all her might. At length she was thrown with her foot in the stirrup.

She was dragged for some distance over stones and thorns into a heap of mud where she was almost smothered. As everybody had run after her as fast as they could, they soon came up to her: but her skin was scratched all over, her head cut open in four or five places, and one of her arms broken. Never was a bride in a more miserable plight.

The king seemed in despair. They picked her up in pieces like a broken glass. Her cap was on one side, her shoes on the other. They carried her into the city, put her to bed, and sent for the best surgeons. Ill as she was, she never ceased storming. "Gracieuse has played me this trick," said she; "I am certain she only chose that fine but vicious horse in order to make me wish to ride it, and that it might kill me. If the king does not give me satisfaction for this injury I will return to my precious château and never see him again as long as I live!" The king was informed of the rage of Grognon. As his ruling passion was avarice, the mere idea of losing the hundreds of barrels of gold and diamonds made him shudder, and was sufficient to drive him to anything. He ran to the filthy invalid, flung himself at her feet, and protested she had only to name the punishment Gracieuse deserved, and that he abandoned the princess to her resentment. She professed herself satisfied, and said she would send for her.

Accordingly the princess was told Grognon wanted her. She turned pale and trembled, being well assured it was not to caress her. She looked about everywhere for Percinet, but he did not appear, and sadly she proceeded to Grognon's apartment. Scarcely had she entered it when the doors were closed. Four women, who resembled as many furies, threw themselves on her by order of their mistress, and tore all her fine clothes from her back. When her shoulders were bare, these cruel demons could not endure their dazzling whiteness. They shut their eyes as though they had been looking for a long time on snow. "Come, come, courage!" cried the pitiless Grognon from out her bed. "Flay me that girl, and leave her not the least morsel of that white skin she thinks so beautiful." In any other emergency Gracieuse would have wished for the handsome Percinet; but being nearly naked she was too modest to desire his presence, and so prepared herself to suffer everything like a poor innocent lamb. The four furies were each armed with an alarming handful of birchen twigs, and they had besides large brooms out of which they could pull fresh ones, so that they beat her without mercy, and at every blow Grognon called out, "Harder! harder! you spare her!" There is no one who would not suppose, after that, but that the princess was flayed alive from head to foot. They would be mistaken, however; for the gallant Percinet had bewitched the eyes of these women. They imagined they had birch-rods in their hands, but they had only bunches of feathers of all sorts of colours, and from the moment they began to flog her, Gracieuse observed the fact and ceased to be afraid, saying to herself, "Ah, Percinet, you have most generously come to my assistance!

What should I have done without you?" The flagellants so fatigued themselves, that they could no longer lift their arms. They huddled her into her clothes and turned her out of the room with a thousand abusive epithets. She returned to her own chamber pretending to be very ill, went to bed, and ordered that no one should stay near her but her nurse, to whom she related her adventure. She talked herself to sleep, the nurse left her, and on awaking she saw in a corner of the room the green page, whose respect prevented him from approaching her. She assured him she should never forget, as long as she lived, her obligations to him. She conjured him not to abandon her to the fury of her enemy, but begged he would leave the room, as she had always been taught that it was not correct to remain alone with young gentlemen. He replied, that she should see the respect he entertained for her; that it was but just, as she was his mistress, that he should obey her in all things, even at the expense of his own happiness, and thereupon he left her, after advising her to continue feigning indisposition in consequence of the ill-usage she had received.

Grognon was so gratified to learn that Gracieuse was in such a condition, that she got well in half the time she would otherwise have done, and the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence. But as the king was aware that Grognon preferred, above everything, to be extolled for her beauty, he had her portrait painted, and commanded a tournament in which six of the best knights in his Court should maintain against all comers that Queen Grognon was the loveliest princess in the world.

A great many foreign knights appeared in the lists to maintain the contrary. The baboon herself was present at all the encounters, seated in a grand balcony hung with cloth of gold, and had the pleasure of seeing the skill of her champions successful in her bad cause. Gracieuse, placed behind her, attracted every eye, and Grognon, as silly as she was vain, imagined that no one could look at anybody but her.

There was scarcely any one left to dispute the beauty of Grognon, when a young knight presented himself bearing a portrait in a diamond box. He declared that he would maintain Grognon was the ugliest of all old women, and that she whose portrait was in the box was the fairest of all young maidens. So saying, he charged the six knights and unhorsed every one of them. Six others presented themselves, and so on to the number of four-and-twenty, all of whom he overthrew. Then opening his box, he told them that, by way of consolation for their defeat, he would show them the beautiful portrait. Every one instantly recognised it to be that of the Princess Gracieuse.

The victorious knight made her a profound obeisance, and retired without making himself known, but she had not the least doubt it was Percinet. Grognon was nearly suffocated with passion; her throat swelled to such a degree that she could not utter a word. She made signs that it was Gracieuse she was enraged at, and as soon as she could speak she began to rave like a mad woman. "How!" she exclaimed. "Dare

to dispute with me the palm of beauty! To bring such disgrace upon my knights! No, I cannot endure it; I must have vengeance or death!" "Madam," said the princess, "I protest that I had not the least hand in anything that has happened. I am ready to attest with my blood, if it be your pleasure, that you are the handsomest person in the world, and that I am a monster of ugliness." "Ah, you can joke, can you, my little darling?" replied Grognon, "but I will have my turn before long." The king was informed of the rage of his wife, and that the princess was dying with terror, and implored him to have pity on her, as should he leave her to the mercy of the queen she would do her a thousand mischiefs. He was perfectly unmoved by the appeal, and simply answered, "I have given her to her stepmother. She may do as she pleases with her."

The wicked Grognon waited impatiently for night to arrive. As soon as it was dark she ordered the horses to be put to her travelling carriage. Gracieuse was forced into it, and under a strong escort she was conveyed to a large forest a hundred leagues distant, through which nobody dared pass, as it was full of lions, bears, tigers, and wolves. When they had reached the middle of this terrible wood they made the princess alight, and left her there regardless of her piteous supplications. "I do not ask you to spare my life," she cried, "I only request immediate death. Kill me and spare me all the tortures I must suffer here!" They were deaf to her entreaties. They did not even deign to answer her, and, galloping off, left the lovely and unfortunate maiden alone in the forest. She hurried on for some time without knowing whither she was going, now running against some tree, now falling, now entangled in the bushes, till at length, overwhelmed with anguish, she threw herself on the ground unable to rise again. "Percinet!" she cried twice or thrice, "Percinet! Where are you? Is it possible you can have abandoned me?" As she uttered the last words, she suddenly beheld the most surprising thing in the world. It was an illumination so magnificent that there was not a tree in the forest on which there were not several chandeliers filled with wax lights, and at the far end of an avenue she perceived a palace built entirely of crystal, which blazed like the sun. She began to imagine Percinet had some hand in this new enchantment, and felt her joy a little mingled with fear. "I am alone," she said, "the prince is young, amiable, in love, and I owe him my life! Ah! It is too much!—Let me fly from him!—Better for me to die than love him!" So saying, she managed to rise from the ground, notwithstanding her weariness and weakness, and without casting another look towards the splendid palace she hurried off in an opposite direction, so distressed and so bewildered by the various feelings which agitated her that she did not know what she was doing.

At that moment she heard a noise behind her. Fear seized her. She thought it was some wild beast that was about to devour her. She looked back, trembling, and beheld Prince Percinet as handsome as they paint the God of Love. "You fly me, my

princess!" said he. "You fear me when I adore you! Is it possible you can know so little of my respect as to suppose me capable of failing in it to you! Come! come without fear, into the fairy palace. I will not enter it if you forbid me. You will find there the queen my mother, and my sisters, who already love you tenderly from my account of you." Gracieuse, charmed by the humble and engaging manner in which her young lover addressed her, could not refuse to enter with him a little sledge, painted and gilt, and drawn by two stags, at a prodigiously swift pace, so that in a very short time he conducted her to a thousand points in the forest, each of which appeared to her admirable. It was throughout as light as day. There were shepherds and shepherdesses gallantly dressed who danced to the sound of flutes and bagpipes. In other spots, by the side of fountains, she saw village swains and maidens feasting and singing gaily. "I thought this forest was uninhabited," said she to the prince; "but it seems full of happy people." "From the moment you set foot in it," replied Percinet, "this gloomy solitude became the abode of pleasure and mirth. The loves accompany you, and flowers grow beneath your feet." Gracieuse feared to enter into such a conversation: she therefore requested him to conduct her to his mother, the queen. He immediately ordered the stags to proceed to the fairy palace. As she approached it she heard most exquisite music, and the queen with two of her daughters met her, embraced her, and led her into a large saloon, the walls of which were of rock-crystal. She observed, with great astonishment, that all her own history to that very day was engraved upon the walls, even the excursion she had just made with the prince in the sledge; and the execution of the work was so fine that the masterpieces of Phidias and all that Greece ever could boast were not to be compared to it. "You have very diligent artists," said Gracieuse to Percinet; "every action, every gesture of mine is instantly sculptured." "Because I would not lose the recollection of the slightest circumstance relating to you, my princess," replied he. "Alas, in no place am I happy or contented!" She

made him no answer; but thanked the queen for the manner in which she had received her. A grand banquet was served up, to which Gracieuse did justice, for she was delighted to have found Percinet in lieu of the bears and lions she had dreaded to meet in the forest. Although she was very tired, the prince persuaded her to pass into a saloon dazzling with gold and painting, in which an opera was performed before her. The subject was the Loves of Cupid and Psyche, and it was interspersed with dances and allusive songs. A young shepherd came forward and sang the following words:—

"Gracieuse, beloved thou art,
And by such a loving heart,
Love's own god, were he to woo thee,
Could not give a fonder to thee!
Hast thou one thyself more hard,
Than rugged bear or spotted pard?
None so fierce the forest rove,
But obey the power of love.
All things to his sceptre bow,
Cold and cruel only thou!"

Gracieuse blushed at being so directly addressed by name before the queen and the princesses. She told Percinet that it was painful to her to have such a subject publicly alluded to. "It recalls to me a maxim," she continued "which I perfectly approve.

"'Be sparing of thy confidence, and know
That silence can a charm on love bestow;
The world's a wayward judge, and oftentimes
The purest pleasures will denounce as crimes.'"

The prince requested her pardon for having done anything that was displeasing to her, and the opera ended: the two princesses, by order of the queen, conducted Gracieuse to her apartments. Never was anything so magnificent as the furniture, or so elegant as the bed and bed-chamber appropriated to her. She was waited on by four-and-twenty maidens attired as nymphs, the eldest was but eighteen, and each a miracle of beauty. As soon as she was in bed a strain of exquisite music wooed her to sleep; but wonder prevented her closing her eyes. "All I have seen," said she to herself, "is enchantment! How greatly is so amiable and gifted a prince to be feared! I cannot fly these scenes too soon!"—and yet the idea of leaving them caused her considerable pain. To quit so magnificent a palace to place herself in the power of the barbarous Grognon!—The sacrifice was great—one might at least hesitate: on the other hand, she found Percinet so engaging she feared to remain in a palace of which he was the master. As soon as she rose in the morning they brought her dresses of every colour, sets of jewellery of every fashion, laces, ribbons, gloves, silk stockings, all

in the most marvellous taste. Nothing was wanting! Her toilet was of chased gold; she had never been so perfectly dressed, and had never looked so beautiful. Percinet entered the room in a dress of green and gold (green was his colour because Gracieuse was fond of it). All those we have heard boasted of as the best-formed and most amiable of men would have lost by comparison with this young prince. Gracieuse told him she had not been able to sleep; that the recollection of her misfortunes tormented her, and that she could not help dreading the consequences. "What can alarm you, madam?" said he; "you are sovereign here—you are here adored—would you abandon me for your cruel enemy?" "If I were my own mistress," she replied, "I would accept your proposal; but I am accountable to the king, my father, for my actions, and it is better to suffer than fail in my duty." Percinet said everything in the world he could think of to persuade her to marry him; but she would not consent, and it was almost in spite of herself that she was induced to remain one week, during which he invented a thousand new pleasures for her entertainment. She often said to the prince, "I should much like to know what is passing in Grognon's Court, and how she has glossed over her conduct to me." Percinet told her he would send his squire to ascertain, who was an intelligent person. She replied that she was convinced he had no need of any one to inform him of what was going on, and that therefore he could tell her immediately if he chose. "Come then with me," said he, "into the great tower, and you shall see for yourself." Thereupon he led her to the top of an exceedingly high tower which was all of rock crystal, like the rest of the château. He told her to place her foot on his, and her little finger in his mouth, and then to look in the direction of the city. She immediately perceived that the wicked Grognon was with the king, and that she was saying to him, "That wretched princess has hanged herself in the cellar; I have just seen her, she is a most horrible sight—she must be buried immediately, and you will soon get over so trifling a loss." The king began to weep for the death of his daughter. Grognon turned her back upon him, retired to her apartments, caused a log of wood to be dressed up in a cap, and well wrapped in grave-clothes, put into a coffin, and then by order of the king there was a grand funeral, which was attended by everybody, weeping and cursing the cruel stepmother, whom they accused of having caused the death of the princess. All the people went into deep mourning, and she heard the lamentations for her loss, and that they whispered to one another, "What a pity that this lovely young princess should perish through the cruelties of such a wicked creature!—She ought to be cut to pieces and made into a pie!" The king could neither eat nor drink, and cried ready to break his heart.

Gracieuse, seeing her father so afflicted, exclaimed, "Ah, Percinet, I cannot allow my father to believe any longer that I am dead. If you love me, take me back to him." All he could urge was in vain; he was compelled to obey, though with great reluctance. 'My princess," said he, "you will regret more than once leaving this Fairy Palace; for,

as to myself, I dare not think you will regret me. You are more unmerciful to me than Grognon is to you." It was of no use talking; she would go. She took leave of the prince's mother and sisters, entered the sledge with him, and the stags started off. As she left the palace she heard a great noise. She looked back; it was the entire building which had fallen and lay broken into a thousand fragments. "What do I see?" she cried; "the palace destroyed!" "My palace," replied Percinet, "shall be amongst the dead. You will never re-enter it till after you are buried." "You are angry," said Gracieuse, endeavouring to appease him. "But am I not, in fact, more to be pitied than you?"

On arriving at the city, Percinet caused the princess, himself, and the sledge to be invisible. Gracieuse ascended to the king's apartment and flung herself at his feet. When he saw her, he was frightened and would have run away, taking her for a ghost. She stopped him, and assured him she was not dead; that Grognon had caused her to be carried off into the wilderness; that she had climbed up a tree, where she had lived upon wild fruits; that they had buried a log of wood in her place, and ended, by begging him, for mercy's sake, to send her to one of his castles, where she might no longer be exposed to the fury of her stepmother.

The king, scarcely able to credit her story, had the log of wood taken up, and was astounded at the malice of Grognon. Any other monarch would have ordered Grognon to be buried alive in its place; but he was a poor weak man, who hadn't courage enough to be really in a passion. He caressed his daughter a good deal, and made her sup with him. When Grognon's creatures ran and told her of the return of the princess, and that she was supping with the king, she began to rave like a mad woman, and rushing to him, told him there must be no hesitation about it; he must either abandon that cheat to her, or see her, on the instant, take her departure never to return as long as she lived. That it was mere folly to believe that the girl was the Princess Gracieuse. It was true she resembled her slightly, but that Gracieuse had hanged herself; that she had seen her with her own eyes, and that if any credence was given to the story of that imposter, it would be an unpardonable want of respect to, and confidence in her." The king without another word gave up to her the unfortunate princess, believing, or feigning to believe, that she was not his daughter.

Grognon, transported with joy, dragged her, with the help of her women, into a dungeon, where she had her stripped. They took away her costly garments and threw over her a rag of coarse cloth, putting wooden shoes on her feet and a hood of drugget on her head. They barely gave her straw enough to lie upon, and a little black bread to eat.

In this distress, she began to weep bitterly, and to regret the Fairy Palace; but she dared not call on Percinet for succour, feeling that she had treated him too unkindly, and not being able to believe he loved her enough to come again to her aid. In the

meanwhile, the wicked Grognon had sent for a Fairy who was little less malicious than herself. "I have here in my power," she said, "a little hussy who has offended me. I want to punish her, by giving her such difficult tasks to execute that she will not be able to perform them, and so that I may break her bones without giving her a right to complain. Help me to find a new torment for her every day." The Fairy told her she would think of it, and that she should see her again the next morning. She kept her word. She brought a skein of thread as big as four grown-up people, so finely spun that it would break if you breathed on it, and so tangled that it was in a bundle without beginning or end. Grognon, delighted, sent for her beautiful prisoner, and said to her—"There, my good little gossip, set your great powers at work to wind off this skein of thread; and rest assured that if you break the least bit of it, you are lost, for I will flay you alive, myself! Begin whenever you please; but it must be wound off before sunset." With that she shut her up in a room under three locks.

The princess was no sooner left alone than, examining the enormous skein and turning it over and over, breaking a thousand threads in trying to find one to begin with, she became so confused that she ceased attempting to unravel it; and, flinging it into the middle of the room, "Go," she cried, "fatal thread, thou wilt be the cause of my death! Ah, Percinet! Percinet! if my cruelty has not completely offended you, I implore you to hasten—not to save me, but only to receive my last farewell." Thereupon she began to weep so bitterly, that even one who was not a tender lover must have been touched by it. Percinet opened the door as easily as if he had had the key in his pocket. "I am here, my princess," said he to her, "always ready to serve you. I am not capable of deserting you, notwithstanding the poor return you make to my affection." He struck the skein three times with his wand; the broken threads were immediately rejoined, and two more taps unravelled it with most astonishing perfection. He inquired if there was any other service he could render her, and

whether she would never call on him but when she was in trouble. "Do not reproach me, handsome Percinet," said she; "I am already sufficiently miserable." "But, my princess, it is in your own power to liberate yourself from the tyranny of which you are the victim. Come with me. Complete our mutual happiness. What do you fear?" "That you do not love me well enough," replied she. "I would have time to be convinced of your affection." Percinet, exasperated by her suspicions, bowed and disappeared.

The sun was just about to set; Grognon awaited the moment with the greatest impatience. At length she anticipated it, and came with her four furies, who accompanied her everywhere. She put the three keys into the three locks, and said as she opened the door, "I'll wager, now, that this idle beauty hasn't wagged one of her ten fingers. She would much rather have slept to improve her complexion." As soon as she entered, Gracieuse presented her with the ball of thread quite perfect. She had not a word to say, except that Gracieuse had soiled it,—that she was a dirty creature; and for that gave her two such slaps on the face, that the roses and lilies of her cheeks turned blue and yellow. The hapless Gracieuse bore patiently an insult she was not in a position to resent. They took her back to her dungeon, and locked her up carefully. Grognon, vexed that she had not succeeded with the skein of thread, sent for the Fairy, and loaded her with reproaches. "Find out something," she said, "so difficult that she cannot possibly accomplish it." The Fairy departed, and the next day returned with a great barrel full of feathers. There were some of all sorts of birds—nightingales, canaries, greenfinches, goldfinches, linnets, redwings, parrots, owls, sparrows, doves, ostriches, bustards, peacocks, larks, partridges;—I should never have finished if I attempted to name them all. These feathers were so mixed together, that the birds themselves could not have recognised their own. "Here," said the Fairy to Grognon, "is what will try the skill and patience of your prisoner. Order her to pick out these feathers, and put the peacock's, the nightingale's, and every other sort, each by themselves in separate heaps. It would be a task for a fairy." Grognon was ready to die with joy, picturing to herself the perplexity of the wretched princess. She sent for her, threatened her as before, and shut her up with the barrel in the chamber under three locks, ordering her to finish her work by sunset.

Gracieuse took out some of the feathers; but finding it impossible to distinguish the different kinds, threw them back again into the barrel;—then took them out again, and made several attempts to sort them, but perceiving the task was impossible, "Let me die," she cried, despairingly. "It is my death they seek, and death will end my misfortunes. I will not again call Percinet to my assistance. If he loved me he would have been already here." "I am here, my princess," exclaimed Percinet, rising out of the barrel in which he had concealed himself. "I am here to extricate you from the difficulty you are in. Can you doubt, after so many proofs of my affection, that I love

you more than my life?"—Immediately he gave the barrel three taps with his wand, and the feathers came out by millions and sorted themselves into little heaps all round the room. "What do I not owe you, my lord!" said Gracieuse. "But for you I must have perished. Rest assured of my entire gratitude!" The prince tried everything to persuade her to take a firm resolution in his favour. She still asked for time, and though with considerable violence to his own feelings, he granted her request.

Grognon arrived, and was so thunderstruck by what she saw, that she was at her wits' end how further to torment Gracieuse. She did not omit to beat her, however, saying that the feathers were ill arranged. She sent for the Fairy, and flew into a violent passion with her. The Fairy knew not how to answer her; she was perfectly confounded. At length she told Grognon that she would employ all her skill in making a box which should bring her prisoner into great trouble if she ventured to open it; and a few days afterwards she brought a box of a tolerable size. "Here," said she to Grognon, "order your slave to carry this somewhere. Forbid her, particularly, to open it. She will not be able to resist it, and you will be satisfied." Grognon followed her instructions implicitly. "Carry the box," said she to Gracieuse, "to my fine château, and place it on the table in my closet: but I forbid you, under pain of death, to look at what it contains." Gracieuse set off with her wooden shoes, her cloth dress, and her woollen hood. All who met her exclaimed, "That must be a goddess in disguise!" for nothing could conceal her marvellous beauty. She had not walked far before she felt tired. In passing through a little wood, on the skirt of a pleasant meadow, she sat down to take breath. She placed the box on her knees, and suddenly felt an inclination to open it. "What can happen to me?" said she; "I won't take anything out of it, but only see what there is in it." She thought no more of the consequences, but opened the box, and immediately out came a quantity of little men and women, fiddlers, musical instruments, little tables, little cooks, little dishes,—in fact, the giant of the party was not

bigger than one's finger. They skipped about the meadow, divided themselves into several groups, and began the prettiest ball that ever was seen. Some danced, others cooked, others feasted, the little fiddlers played admirably. Gracieuse, at first, was somewhat amused by so extraordinary a sight; but after she had rested a little, and wanted to get them back into the box, not one of them would obey her. The little gentlemen and ladies ran away. The fiddlers followed their example. The cooks, with their stewpans on their heads and their spits on their shoulders, scampered into the wood when she entered the meadow, and into the meadow again when she entered the wood. "O thoughtless curiosity!" said Gracieuse, weeping, "thou wilt be too favourable to my enemy. The only misfortune I could have avoided has been brought on me by my own folly. Oh, I cannot sufficiently blame myself! Percinet!" she cried, "Percinet! If it be possible you can still love such an imprudent princess, come and help me in this, the most unfortunate occurrence in my life!" Percinet did not wait to be called thrice. She saw him appear instantly in his splendid green dress. "If it were not for the wicked Grognon," said he, "beautiful princess, you would never think of me." "Oh, think better of my sentiments," she replied; "I am not so insensible to merit, nor so ungrateful for benefits conferred on me. It is true I try your constancy; but it is to reward it when I am convinced." Percinet, more happy than he had ever been before, tapped the box thrice with his wand, and immediately the little men and women, fiddlers, cooks, and roast-meat, were all packed into it as neatly as if they had never been out of it. Percinet had left his chariot in the wood. He begged the princess to make use of it to go to the rich château. She had much need of the carriage in the state she was in, so making her invisible, he drove her himself and enjoyed the pleasure of her company,—a pleasure which my chronicle asserts she was not indifferent to at the bottom of her heart; but she carefully concealed her sentiments.

She arrived at the rich château, and when she demanded in the name of Grognon to be shown into the queen's closet, the governor burst into a fit of laughter. "What," said he, "do you imagine that you are to leave your sheep to be admitted into so beautiful a place? Be off with you wherever you like; never did wooden shoes tread those floors." Gracieuse begged him to write a line stating his refusal. He did so, and quitting the rich château she found the amiable Percinet awaiting her, who drove her back to the palace. It would be difficult to write down all the tender and respectful things he said to her on the road in the hope of persuading her to put an end to his unhappiness. She promised him that if Grognon played her another wicked trick she would consent.

When her vile stepmother saw her return she flew at the Fairy, whom she had detained, and scratched, and would have strangled her, if a Fairy could have been strangled. Gracieuse presented her with the governor's letter and the box. She threw both into the fire, without deigning to open either, and if she was herself to be believed,

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She opened the box and immediately out came a quantity of little men.

she would have willingly flung the princess into it also; but she did not long postpone her punishment. She had a great hole dug in the garden as deep as a well; over it they placed a large stone. She then went to walk in the garden, and said to Gracieuse and those who accompanied her, "Here is a stone under which I am informed there is a treasure, come, let us lift it quickly." Each lent a helping hand; Gracieuse amongst the rest. This was exactly what Grognon wanted. As soon as the princess was on the brink of the pit, Grognon pushed her violently into it, and the others let the stone fall again on the top of it. This time the case was indeed a hopeless one. How was Percinet to find her in the bowels of the earth? She perfectly comprehended the difficulty of her position, and repented having so long delayed marrying him. "How terrible is my fate!" she cried; "I am buried alive!—the most dreadful of all deaths. You are revenged for my hesitation, Percinet; but I feared you were of the same inconstant nature as other men, who change as soon as they are sure they are beloved. I wished to be convinced of your constancy; my prudent suspicions are the cause of my present condition. If I could still hope you would regret my loss, my fate would be less painful." She was thus giving vent to her anguish when she saw a little door open, which had escaped her attention in the darkness, and through it perceived the light of day, and gardens filled with flowers, fruits, fountains, grottoes, statues, bowers, and summer-houses. She did not hesitate to enter it. She advanced up a grand avenue, wondering what would be the end of this adventure. Almost at the same moment she perceived the fairy palace. She had not much difficulty in recognising it, independently of the facts that one rarely finds a building entirely of rock crystal, and that she perceived all her recent adventures were engraved in it. Percinet appeared with the queen his mother, and his sisters. "Refuse no longer, lovely princess," said the queen to Gracieuse; "it is time to make my son happy, and to relieve you from the deplorable life you lead under the tyranny of Grognon." The grateful princess fell on her knees before her, and told her she placed her fate in her hands, and that she would obey her in all things. That she had not forgotten the prophecy of Percinet at the time she left the fairy palace, when he said to her that that very palace would be amongst the dead, and that she would never re-enter it till after she had been buried. That she had the greatest admiration for his wisdom, and no less for his worth, and that she accepted him for her husband. The prince in his turn knelt at her feet; and at the same instant the palace rang with shouts and music, and the marriage was celebrated with the greatest magnificence. All the fairies for a thousand leagues round appeared with sumptuous equipages; some came in cars drawn by swans, others by dragons, others on clouds, others in globes of fire. Amongst them appeared the fairy who had assisted Grognon to torment Gracieuse. When she recognised the princess, never was any one so surprised. She conjured her to forget the past, and promised she would take every means of atoning for the misery she had made her suffer. Actually,

she would not stay for the banquet; but, re-ascending her car drawn by two terrible serpents, she flew to the king's palace, sought out Grognon, and wrung her neck before the guards or her women could interfere to prevent her.

"Envy, thou mean but most malignant foe
Of all on earth, good, beautiful, and great;
'Twas thy foul hand that aim'd each cruel blow
At Gracieuse, and fann'd the fiendish hate
Of hideous Grognon. What had been thy fate
Sweet princess, if thy fond and faithful guard,
Thy Percinet, had not been ever there?
Oh, well did he deserve the rich reward
Of constancy—the crown the Gods prepare
For all-enduring, pure, unselfish Love to wear."

# THE FAIR WITH GOLDEN HAIR

ONCE upon a time there was a king's daughter, who was so handsome, there was nothing in the world to be compared with her for beauty, and she was called the Fair with Golden Hair: because her locks were like the finest gold, marvellously bright, and falling all in ringlets to her feet. She always appeared with her hair flowing in curls about her, crowned with flowers, and her dresses embroidered with diamonds and pearls. However it might be, it was impossible to see her without loving her. There was a young king amongst her neighbours, who was unmarried, very handsome, and very rich. When he heard all that was said about the Fair with Golden Hair, although he had never seen her, he fell so deeply in love with her, that he could neither eat nor drink, and therefore resolved to send an ambassador to ask her hand in marriage. He had a magnificent coach made for this ambassador, gave him upwards of a hundred horses and as many servants, and charged him particularly not to return without the princess. From the moment that the envoy had taken leave of the king, the whole court talked of nothing else; and the king, who never doubted that the Fair with Golden Hair would consent to his proposal, ordered immediately fine dresses and splendid furniture to be prepared for her. While the workmen were hard at work, the ambassador arrived at the Fair one's court and delivered his little message; but whether she was that day out of temper, or that the compliment was not agreeable to her, she answered the ambassador, that she thanked the king, but had no inclination to marry. The ambassador quitted the court of the princess very low-spirited at not being able to bring her with him. He carried back all the presents he had been the bearer of from the king, for the princess was very prudent, and was perfectly aware that young ladies should never receive gifts from bachelors; so she declined accepting the beautiful diamonds and the other valuable articles, and only retained, in order not to affront the king, a quarter of a pound of English pins.[1]

When the ambassador reached the capital city of the king, where he was so impatiently awaited, everybody was afflicted that he did not bring back with him the

[1] A proof of the estimation in which English pins were held before 1700. Pins were formerly in such great demand for new year's gifts in Paris, that on New Year's Day, and "the eve thereof," extra shops were specially licensed for their sale

Fair with Golden Hair, and the king began to cry like a child. They endeavoured to console him, but without the least success.

There was a youth at court who was as beautiful as the sun, and had the finest figure in the kingdom. On account of his graceful manners and his intelligence he was called Avenant. Everybody loved him, except the envious, who were vexed that the king conferred favours upon him, and daily confided to him his affairs.

Avenant was in company with some persons who were talking of the return of the ambassador, and saying he had done no good. "If the king had sent me to the Fair with Golden Hair," said he to them carelessly, "I am certain she would have returned with me." These mischief-makers went immediately to the king, and said, "Sire, you know not what Avenant asserts—That if you had sent him to the Fair with Golden Hair he would have brought her back with him. Observe his malice! He pretends that he is handsomer than you, and that she would have been so fond of him that she would have followed him anywhere."

At this the king flew into a rage—a rage so terrible, that he was quite beside himself. "Ha, ha!" he cried, "this petty minion laughs at my misfortune, and values himself above me! Go! Fling him into the great tower, and let him starve to death!"

The royal guards hastened in search of Avenant, who had quite forgotten what he had said. They dragged him to prison, inflicting a thousand injuries upon him. The poor youth had only a little straw to lie upon, and would soon have perished but for a tiny spring that trickled through the foundations of the tower, and of which he drank a few drops to refresh himself, his mouth being parched with thirst. One day, when he was quite exhausted, he exclaimed, with a heavy sigh: "What does the king complain of? He has not a subject more loyal than I am; I have never done anything to offend him!" The king by chance passed close by the tower, and hearing the voice of one he had loved so dearly, he stopped to listen, notwithstanding those who were with him, who hated Avenant, and said to the king, "What interests you, sire? Do you not know he is a rogue?" The king replied: "Leave me alone; I would hear what he has to say." Having listened to his complaints, the tears stood in his eyes: he opened the door of the tower and called to the prisoner. Avenant came, and knelt before him in deep sorrow, and kissed his feet. "What have I done, sire, that I am thus severely treated?" "Thou hast made game of me, and of my ambassador," answered the king. "Thou hast boasted, that if I had sent thee to the Fair with Golden Hair, thou wouldst certainly have brought her back with thee."

"It is true, sire," rejoined Avenant, "that I should have so impressed her with the sense of your majesty's high qualities, that I feel persuaded she could not have refused you; and in saying that, sire, I uttered nothing that could be disagreeable to you." The king saw clearly that Avenant was innocent. He cast an angry look upon the traducers of his favourite, and brought him away with him, sincerely repenting the wrong he had done to him. After giving him an excellent supper he called him into

his cabinet and said to him: "Avenant, I still love the Fair with Golden Hair; her refusal has not discouraged me: but I know not what course to take to induce her to marry me. I am tempted to send thee to her to see if thou couldst succeed." Avenant replied that he was ready to obey him in everything, and that he would set out the next day. "Hold," said the king; "I would give thee a splendid equipage." "It is unnecessary," answered Avenant; "I need only a good horse, and letters of credence from your majesty." The king embraced him, for he was delighted to find him prepared to start so quickly.

It was on a Monday morning that he took leave of the king and of his friends to proceed on his embassy, quite alone and without pomp or noise. His mind was occupied solely with schemes to induce the Fair with Golden Hair to marry the king. He had a writing-case in his pocket, and when a happy idea occurred to him for his introductory address, he alighted from his steed and seated himself under the trees to commit it to paper, so that he might not forget anything. One morning that he had set out at the first peep of day, in passing through a large meadow, a charming idea came into his head: he dismounted, and seated himself beside some willows and poplars which were planted along the bank of a little river that ran by the edge of the meadow. After he had made his note, he looked about him, delighted to find himself in so beautiful a spot. He perceived on the grass a large gilded carp gasping and nearly exhausted, for in trying to catch some little flies it had leaped so far out of the water that it had fallen on the grass, and was all but dead. Avenant took pity upon it, and, although it was a fast-day, and he might have carried it off for his dinner, he picked it up and put it gently back into the river. As soon as my friend the carp felt the freshness of the water, she began to recover herself, and glided down to the very bottom, then rising again joyously to the bank of the stream. "Avenant," said she, "I thank you for the kindness you have done me; but for you I should have died. You have saved me; I will do as much for you." After this little compliment she darted

down again into the water, leaving Avenant much surprised at her intelligence and great civility.

Another day, as he continued his journey, he saw a crow in great distress. The poor bird was pursued by a large eagle (a great devourer of crows), which had nearly caught it, and would have swallowed it like a lentil if Avenant had not felt compassion for its misfortune. "Thus," he cried, "do the strong oppress the weak. What right has the eagle to eat the crow?" He seized his bow and arrow, which he always carried with him, and taking a good aim at the eagle, whizz! he sent the shaft right through its body; it fell dead, and the crow, enraptured, came and perched on a tree. "Avenant," it cried to him, "it was very generous of you thus to succour me, I who am only a poor crow; but I will not be ungrateful, I will do as much for you."

Avenant admired the good sense of the crow, and resumed his journey. Entering a great wood so early in the morning that there was scarcely light enough for him to see his road, he heard an owl screeching like an owl in despair. "Hey-day!" said he, "here's an owl in great affliction. It has been caught, perhaps, in some net." He searched on all sides, and at last discovered some large nets, which had been spread by fowlers during the night to catch small birds. "What a pity," said he, "that men are only made to torment each other, or to persecute poor animals which do them no wrong or mischief." He drew his knife and cut the cords. The owl took flight: but returning swiftly on the wing, "Avenant," it cried, "it is needless for me to make a long speech to enable you to comprehend the obligation I am under to you: it speaks plainly enough for itself. The hunters would soon have been here. I had been taken, I had been dead, but for your assistance. I have a grateful heart; I will do as much for you."

These were the three most important adventures which befell Avenant on his journey. He was so eager to reach the end of it, that he lost no time in repairing to the palace of the Fair with Golden Hair. Everything about it was admirable. There were diamonds to be seen in heaps, as though they were pebbles. Fine clothes, sweetmeats, money—the most wonderful sight that ever was seen; and Avenant thought in his heart, if he could persuade the princess to leave all this to go to the king his master, he should be very lucky indeed. He dressed himself in a suit of brocade, with a plume of carnation and white feathers; combed and powdered himself, washed his face, put a richly embroidered scarf round his neck, with a little basket, and in it a beautiful little dog which he had bought as he came through Bologna.[1] Avenant was so handsome, so amiable, and did everything with so much grace, that when he presented himself at the palace gate, the guards saluted him most respectfully, and they ran to inform the Fair with Golden Hair that Avenant, ambassador from the king, her nearest neighbour, requested to be presented to her.

[1] Not "Boulogne" in France, as generally translated. Evelyn, in his Diary, speaking of Bologna in 1645, says: "Many of the religious men nourish those lap-dogs which the ladies are so fond of, and which they here sell. They are a pigmy sort of spaniel, whose noses they break when puppies, which in my opinion deforms them."

At the name of Avenant, the princess said, "That betokens something agreeable to me. I would wager he is a pretty fellow, and pleases everybody." "Yes, in sooth, madam," exclaimed all her maids of honour; "we saw him from the loft in which we were dressing your flax, and as long as he remained under the windows we could do no work." "Very pretty," replied the Fair with Golden Hair; "amusing yourselves with looking at young men! Here, give me my grand gown of blue embroidered satin, and arrange my fair hair very tastefully; get me some garlands of fresh flowers, my high-heeled shoes, and my fan. Let them sweep my presence chamber, and dust my throne; for I would have him declare everywhere that I am truly the Fair with Golden Hair."

All her women hastened to attire her like a queen. They were in such a hurry that they ran against each other, and made scarcely any progress. At length, however, the princess passed into the great gallery of mirrors, to see if anything was wanting, and then ascended her throne of gold, ivory, and ebony, which emitted a perfume like balsam, and commanded her maids of honour to take their instruments, and sing very softly so as not to confuse any one.

Avenant was ushered into the hall of audience. He was so struck with admiration, that he has since declared frequently that he could scarcely speak; nevertheless, he took courage, and delivered his oration to perfection. He beseeched the princess that he might not have the mortification of returning without her. "Gentle Avenant," she replied, "the arguments you have adduced are all of them exceedingly good, and I assure you I should be very happy to favour you more than another, but you must know that about a month ago I was walking by the river side, with all my ladies in waiting, and in pulling off my glove in order to take some refreshment that was served me, I drew from my finger a ring, which unfortunately fell into the stream. I valued it more than my kingdom. I leave you to imagine the grief its loss occasioned me. I have made a vow never to listen to any offers of marriage, if the ambassador, who proposes the husband, does not restore to me my ring. You now see, therefore, what you have to do in this matter, for though you should talk to me for a fortnight, night and day, you would never persuade me to change my mind."

Avenant was much surprised at this answer: he made the princess a low bow, and begged her to accept the little dog, the basket, and the scarf; but she replied that she would receive no presents, and bade him go and reflect on what she had said to him. When he returned to his lodgings, he went to bed without eating any supper, and his little dog, whose name was Cabriolle, would take none himself, and went and lay down beside his master. All night long Avenant never ceased sighing. "Where can I hope to find a ring that fell a month ago into a great river?" said he; "it would be folly to attempt looking for it. The princess only named this condition to me because she knew it was impossible for me to fulfil it." And then he sighed again, and was very sorrowful. Cabriolle, who heard him, said, "My dear master, I entreat you not to despair of your good fortune; you are too amiable not to be happy. Let us go to

the river side as soon as it is daylight." Avenant gave him two little pats, without saying a word, and, worn out with grieving, fell asleep.

Cabriolle, as soon as he saw daybreak, frisked about so that he waked Avenant, and said to him, "Dress yourself, master, and let us go out." Avenant was quite willing; he arose, dressed, and descended into the garden, and from the garden strayed mechanically towards the river, on the banks of which he strolled with his hat pulled over his eyes, and his arms folded, thinking only of taking his departure, when suddenly he heard himself called by his name, "Avenant! Avenant!" He looked all around him, and could see nobody: he thought he was dreaming. He resumed his walk, when again the voice called, "Avenant! Avenant!" "Who calls me?" he asked. Cabriolle, who was very little and was looking close down into the water, replied, "Never trust me if it be not a golden carp that I see here." Immediately the carp appeared on the surface, and said to Avenant, "You saved my life in the nettle-tree meadow,[1] where I must have perished but for your assistance. I promised to do as much for you. Here, dear Avenant, is the ring of the Fair with Golden Hair. Avenant stooped and took the ring out of his friend the carp's mouth, whom he thanked a thousand times. Instead of returning to his lodgings he went directly to the palace, followed by little Cabriolle, who was very glad he had induced his master to take a walk by the river side. The princess was informed that Avenant requested to see her. "Alas! poor youth," said she, "he is come to take leave of me. He is convinced that I required an impossibility, and he is about to return with these tidings to his master." Avenant was introduced, and presented her with the ring, saying, "Madam, I have obeyed your commands. Will it please you to accept the king my master for your husband?" When she saw her ring quite perfect she was so astonished,

[1] "Pré des Alisiers." "Alisier, the lote or nettle-tree." "Alisier gris, the grey lote. Alisier rouge, the red lote, both (and all the kinds thereof) strangers in England," writes Cotgrave in his Dictionary, Ed. 1650.

so astonished, that she thought she was dreaming; "Really," said she, "courteous Avenant, you must be favoured by a fairy, for by natural means this is impossible." "Madam," he answered, "I am not acquainted with any fairy, but I was very anxious to obey you." "As you are so obliging," continued she, "you must do me another service, without which I never will be married. There is a prince not far from here, named Galifron, who has taken it into his head he will make me his wife. He declared to me his determination, accompanying it by the most terrible threats, that if I refused him he would lay waste my kingdom; but judge if I could accept him. He is a giant taller than a high tower; he eats a man as a monkey eats a chestnut; when he goes into the country he carries in his pockets small cannons which he uses for pistols, and when he speaks very loud those who are near him become deaf. I sent word to him that I did not wish to marry, and that he must excuse me, but he never ceased to persecute me. He kills all my subjects, and before anything can be done you must fight him and bring me his head."

Avenant was a little astounded at this proposition; he mused for a few minutes upon it, and then answered, "Well, madam, I will fight Galifron; I believe I shall be conquered, but I will die as becomes a brave man." The princess was much surprised at his determination; she said a thousand things to prevent his undertaking the adventure. It was of no use. He withdrew to seek for weapons and everything else he might require. When he had made his preparations, he replaced little Cabriolle in his basket, mounted a fine horse, and rode into the dominions of Galifron. He inquired about him of all he met, and every one told him he was a very demon whom nobody dared approach. The more he heard of him the more his alarm increased. Cabriolle encouraged him, and said, "My dear master, while you fight him I will bite his legs; he will stoop to rid himself of me, and then you can kill him easily." Avenant admired the wit of the little dog, but he knew well enough that his help could be of little avail. At length he arrived in the neighbourhood of Galifron's castle. All the roads to it were strewed with the bones and bodies of men whom he had eaten or torn to pieces. He did not wait long before he saw the monster coming through a wood; his head was visible above the highest trees, and he sang in a terrible voice:—

"Ho! bring me some babies, fat or lean,
That I may crunch 'em my teeth between!
I could eat so many! so many! so many!
That in the wide world there would not be left any!"

Upon which Avenant immediately sang to the same tune:—

"Ho! Here is Avenant to be seen,
Who comes to draw your teeth so keen;
He's not the greatest man to view,
But he's big enough to conquer you."

The rhymes were not quite adapted to the music, but he made them in a great hurry; and it is really a miracle they were not much worse, for he was in a desperate fright. When Galifron heard these words, he looked about him in

every direction, and caught sight of Avenant who's, sword in hand, uttered several taunts to provoke him. They were needless however. He was in a dreadful rage, and snatching up an iron mace, he would have crushed the gentle Avenant at one blow, had not a crow lighted at that instant on his head, and with its beak most adroitly picked out both his eyes. The blood ran down his face, and he laid about him on all sides like a madman. Avenant avoided his blows, and gave him such thrusts with his sword, running it up to the hilt in his body, that at last he fell bleeding from a thousand wounds. Avenant quickly cut off his head, quite transported with joy at his good fortune; and the crow, who had perched itself on the nearest tree, said to him, "I have not forgotten the service you rendered me in killing the eagle which pursued me. I promised you I would return the obligation. I trust I have done so to-day." "I owe all to you, Monsieur Crow," replied Avenant, "and remain your obliged servant;" and forthwith mounted his horse, laden with the horrible head of Galifron. When he reached the city, all the people followed him, crying, "Behold the brave Avenant, who has slain the monster!" So that the princess, who heard a great uproar, and who trembled lest they should come and announce to her the death of Avenant, dared not inquire what had happened. But the next moment she saw Avenant enter bearing the giant's head, which still impressed her with terror, although there was no longer any occasion for alarm. "Madam," said Avenant to the princess, "your enemy is dead: I trust you will no longer refuse the king my master." "Ah! pardon me," said the Fair with Golden Hair; "but, indeed, I must refuse him, unless you can find means, before my departure, to bring me some water from the Gloomy Grotto. Hard by there is a deep cavern, full six leagues in extent. At the mouth of it are two dragons, who prevent any one from entering: flames issue from their jaws and eyes. Inside the cavern is a deep pit, into which you must descend: it is full of toads, adders, and serpents. At the bottom of this pit there is a small cavity, through which flows the fountain of Health and Beauty. Some of that water I must absolutely obtain. Whatever is

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He perceived a horrible rock, as black as ink, and the next minute one of the dragons casting out fire from his mouth.

washed with it becomes something marvellous. If persons are handsome, they remain so for ever; if ugly, they become beautiful; if young, they remain always young; if old, they become young again. You may well imagine, Avenant, that I would not quit my kingdom without some of this wonderful water." "Madam," he replied, "you are so beautiful already, that this water will be quite useless to you; but I am an unfortunate ambassador, whose death you desire. I go in search of that which you covet, with the certainty that I shall never return." The Fair with Golden Hair was immovable, and Avenant set out with the little dog Cabriolle to seek in the Gloomy Grotto the water of beauty. Everybody who met him on the road exclaimed, "'Tis a pity to see so amiable a youth wantonly court destruction. He goes alone to the grotto, when even if he had a hundred men to back him he could not accomplish his object. Why will the princess only demand impossibilities?" Avenant passed on without saying a word, but he was in very low spirits.

Having nearly got to the top of a mountain, he sat down to rest a little, allowing his horse to graze and Cabriolle to run after the flies. He knew that the Gloomy Grotto was not far from that spot, and looked about to see if he could discover it. He perceived a horrible rock, as black as ink, out of which issued a thick smoke; and the next minute one of the dragons, casting out fire from his mouth and eyes. It had a green and yellow body, great claws, and a long tail, coiled round in more than a hundred folds. Cabriolle saw all this, and was so frightened he did not know where to hide himself. Avenant, perfectly prepared to die, drew his sword, and descended towards the cavern, with a phial which the Fair with Golden Hair had given him to fill with the water of beauty. He said to his little dog Cabriolle, "It is all over with me; I shall never be able to obtain the water which is guarded by those dragons. When I am dead, fill the phial with my blood, and carry it to the princess, that she may see what she has cost me. Then go to the king my master, and tell him my sad story." As he uttered these words, he heard a voice calling, "Avenant! Avenant!" "Who calls me?" he asked; and he saw an owl in the hollow of an old tree, who said to him: "You let me out of the fowler's net in which I was caught, and saved my life. I promised I would do you as good a turn, and now is the time. Give me your phial. I am familiar with all the windings in the Gloomy Grotto. I will fetch you some of the water of beauty." Oh, I leave you to imagine who was delighted! Avenant quickly handed the phial to the owl, and saw it enter the grotto without the least difficulty. In less than a quarter of an hour the bird returned with the phial full of water, and tightly stoppered. Avenant was in ecstasies! He thanked the owl heartily, and, re-ascending the mountain, joyfully took his way back to the city.

He went straight to the palace and presented the phial to the Fair with Golden Hair, who had no longer an excuse to make. She thanked Avenant, gave orders for everything to be got ready for her departure, and finally set out with him on their journey. She found him an exceedingly agreeable companion, and said to him more

than once, "If you had wished it, I would have made you king, and there would have been no occasion for us to quit my dominions." But his answer was always, "I would not be guilty of such treachery to my master for all the kingdoms on the face of the earth, although you are to me more beautiful than the sun!"

At length they arrived at the king's capital city, and his majesty, hearing the Fair with Golden Hair was approaching, went to meet her, and made her the most superb presents in the world! The marriage was celebrated with such great rejoicings, that folks could talk of nothing else. But the Fair with Golden Hair, who secretly loved Avenant, was never happy when he was out of her sight, and was always praising him. "But for Avenant," she would say to the king, "I should never have been here. For my sake he has done impossibilities. You should feel deeply indebted to him. He obtained for me the water of beauty. I shall never grow old, and I shall always remain handsome." The envious courtiers who heard the queen express herself thus, said to the king, "You are not jealous, and yet you have good cause to be so. The queen is so deeply in love with Avenant, that she can neither eat nor drink. She can talk of nothing but him, and of the obligations you are under to him. As if any one else it had pleased you to send to her would not have done as much!" "That's quite true," said the king, "now I think of it. Let him be put in the tower, with irons on his hands and feet." Avenant was accordingly seized, and in return for his faithful service to the king, fettered hand and foot in a dungeon. He was allowed to see no one but the gaoler, who threw him a morsel of black bread through a hole, and gave him some water in an earthen pan. His little dog Cabriolle, however, did not desert him; but came daily to console him and tell him all the news. When the Fair with Golden Hair heard of Avenant's disgrace, she flung herself at the king's feet, and, bathed in tears, implored him to release Avenant from prison. But the more she entreated, the more angry the king became, for he thought to himself, "It is because she loves him;" so he refused to stir in the matter. The queen ceased to urge him, and fell into a deep melancholy.

The king took it into his head that perhaps she did not think him handsome enough, He longed to wash his face with the water of beauty, in hopes that the queen would then feel more affection for him. The phial full of this water stood on the chimney-piece in the queen's chamber: she had placed it there for the pleasure of looking at it more frequently; but one of her chamber maids, trying to kill a spider with a broom, unfortunately threw down the phial, which broke in the fall, and all the water was lost. She swept the fragments of glass away quickly: and, not knowing what to do, it suddenly occurred to her that she had seen in the king's cabinet a phial precisely similar, full of water, as clear as the water of beauty; so, without a word to any one, she adroitly managed to get possession of it, and placed it on the queen's chimney-piece.

The water which was in the king's cabinet was used for the execution of princes and great noblemen who were condemned to die for any crime. Instead of beheading or hanging them, their faces were rubbed with this water, which had the fatal property of throwing them into a deep sleep, from which they never awakened. So it happened one evening that the king took down the phial which he fancied contained the water of beauty, and rubbing the contents well over his face, he fell into a profound slumber and expired. The little dog, Cabriolle, was the first to hear the news of the king's death, and ran with it to Avenant, who begged him to go and find the Fair with Golden Hair, and remind her of the poor prisoner.

Cabriolle slipped quietly through the crowd, for there was great confusion at court, in consequence of the king's death, and said to the queen, "Madam, do not forget poor Avenant." She immediately recalled to her mind all that he had suffered on her account, and his extreme fidelity. She left the palace without speaking to any one, and went directly to the tower, where with her own hands she took the irons off the hands and feet of Avenant, and putting a crown of gold upon his head, and a royal mantle over his shoulders, she said, "Come, charming Avenant, I make you king, and take you for my husband." He threw himself at her feet in joy and gratitude. Everybody was delighted to have him for their master. His nuptials were the most splendid that ever were seen in the world, and the Fair with Golden Hair reigned long and happily with the handsome Avenant.

"A kindly action never fail to do.
The smallest brings a blessing back to you.
When Avenant preserved the carp and crow,
And even had compassion on the woe
Of an ill-omen'd and ill-favour'd owl,
Who would have dream'd a feeble fish or fowl
Would place him on the pinnacle of fame?
When of his king he urged the tender flame,
And won the fair he for another woo'd,
Unshaken in his loyalty he stood.
Innocent victim of a rival's hate,
When all seem'd lost—when darkest frown'd his fate
Just Providence reversed the ruthless doom,—
To Virtue gave the throne, to Tyranny a tomb."

# THE BLUE BIRD

ONCE upon a time there was a king who was exceedingly rich both in lands and money. His wife died, and he was inconsolable. He shut himself up for a week in a little room, where he beat his head against the walls in the extremity of his affliction. Fearing he would kill himself, they put some mattresses between the tapestry and the wall, so that knock himself about as much as he pleased he could not do himself any mischief. All his subjects agreed amongst themselves, that they would go to him and exert their utmost eloquence to moderate his grief. Some prepared grave and serious orations; others, agreeable, and even lively addresses; but none made the least impression upon his mind, for he scarcely heard a word they said to him. At last a female presented herself before him, so muffled up in black crape, veils, mantles and other long mourning garments, and who wept and sobbed so much and so loudly, that he was perfectly astonished. She told him she would not attempt, as others had done, to mitigate his sorrow; she came to augment it, as nothing could be more just than to lament the loss of a good wife; that for her own part, having lost the best of husbands, she had made up her mind to weep as long as she had eyes in her head; and thereupon she redoubled her groans, and the king, following her example, began to howl outright. He received this visitor with more attention than the others. He talked to her of the excellent qualities of his dear departed, and she recapitulated all those of her beloved defunct. They talked so much of their sorrow, that at last they were puzzled to know what more to say about it. When the cunning widow saw the subject was nearly exhausted, she raised her veil a little and the afflicted king refreshed his sight with the contemplation of this poor mourner, who rolled about her large blue eyes fringed with long black lashes in the most effective manner. Her complexion was still blooming. The king examined her with a great deal of attention. By degrees he spoke less and less of his wife: at last he ceased to speak of her altogether. The widow declared that she should never leave off mourning for her husband. The king implored her not to make sorrow eternal. In fine, to the astonishment of everybody, he married her, and the sables were changed into

green and rose colour. It is often only requisite to ascertain the particular foibles of persons, to enable you to creep into their confidence, and do just as you please with them.

The king had only had a daughter by his first wife, who was considered the eighth wonder of the world. She was named Florine because she was so sweet, young, and beautiful. She was seldom seen in splendid attire, she preferred light morning dresses of taffety, fastened with a few jewels, and quantities of the finest flowers, which produced an admirable effect when twined with her beautiful hair. She was only fifteen when the king was re-married.

The new queen sent for her own daughter, who had been brought up by her godmother, the Fairy Soussio, but she was not more graceful or beautiful in consequence. Soussio had laboured hard to make something of her, but had laboured in vain. She loved her dearly, though, notwithstanding. Her name was Truitonne, her face being covered with reddish spots like those on the back of a trout.[1] Her black hair was so greasy and dirty that no one would venture to touch it, and oil oozed out of her yellow skin. The queen, her mother, doted on her; she talked of nothing but the charming Truitonne, and as Florine possessed so many advantages over her daughter, it exasperated her, and she sought, by every possible means, to injure the poor princess in the eyes of her father. Not a day passed that the queen and Truitonne did not play Florine some mischievous trick. The princess, who was mild as she was sensible, only endeavoured to keep herself out of the reach of their malice.

The king observed one day to the queen, that Florine and Truitonne were of an age to be married, and that they should bestow the hand of one of them on the first prince who visited their court. "I wish," said the queen, "that my daughter should be married first; she is older than yours, and as she is a thousand time more amiable there can be no hesitation about the matter." The king, who disliked argument,

[1] *Truite*, in French.

answered that he was quite willing it should be so, and that he left her to take any measures she pleased.

A short time after this, it was announced that a visit from King Charmant might be expected. Never was any prince more celebrated for gallantry and magnificence. In mind and person he was charming, as his name implied. When the queen heard this news, she employed all the embroiderers, all the tailors, all the work-people of every kind, to make dresses for Truitonne, and requested the king to give nothing new to Florine. She then bribed the waiting women to steal all the princess's clothes, head-dresses, and jewels, the very day King Charmant arrived, so that when Florine went to dress she could not find even a ribbon. She knew well enough who had done her this good turn. She sent to purchase materials for a new dress; but all the tradesmen returned for answer, that they had been forbidden by the queen to furnish her with anything. She was left, therefore, with only the gown she had on her back, and which was very much soiled, and she was so ashamed of her appearance that, when King Charmant arrived, she hid herself in a corner of the hall.

The queen received her royal visitor with great pomp, and presented her daughter to him, a complete blaze of magnificence, which only made her look more ugly than usual. King Charmant turned his eyes from her as soon as possible. The queen endeavoured to persuade herself that he was too much struck with her, and was afraid of committing himself. In this belief, she continually placed Truitonne before him. He inquired if there was not another princess named Florine. "Yes," said Truitonne, pointing to her with her finger; "there she is, hiding herself, because she is not finely dressed." Florine blushed, and looked so beautiful, so exceedingly beautiful in her confusion, that King Charmant was perfectly dazzled. He rose immediately and bowed profoundly to the princess. "Madam," said he, "your incomparable beauty renders the foreign aid of ornament quite unnecessary." "Sir," replied she, "I own I am little accustomed to wear so disgraceful a dress as this, and I should have been better pleased to have escaped your notice." "It would have been impossible," exclaimed Charmant, "for a princess so marvellously beautiful to be anywhere without attracting all eyes from the contemplation of any other object." "Ah," said the queen, greatly irritated, "it is pretty pastime to hear you pay these compliments! Believe me, sir, Florine is already vain enough; she stands in no need of such excessive flattery." King Charmant quickly perceived the queen's motives for thus speaking, but as he was not at all accustomed to constrain his inclinations, he continued openly to manifest his admiration of Florine, and conversed with her for three whole hours.

The queen in despair, and Truitonne inconsolable that the princess should be thus preferred to her, complained bitterly to the king, and compelled him to consent that, during the residence of King Charmant, Florine should be shut up in a tower, where they could not see each other; and, accordingly, no sooner had she retired to her apartments than four men in masks seized and carried her to a room at the top of the

tower, where they left her in the greatest distress, for she saw clearly that she was thus treated in order to prevent her securing the affections of her royal admirer, with whom already she was much delighted, and would willingly have accepted him for her husband.

As he was not in the least aware of the violence that had been used towards the princess, he awaited with the greatest impatience the hour when he hoped to meet her again. He talked of her to the gentlemen whom the king had placed about his person to do him honour, but, as they had been ordered by the queen, they said all the ill of her they could imagine :—that she was coquettish, inconstant, ill-tempered ; that she tormented her friends and her servants ; that it was impossible for any one to be more slovenly ; and that she was so avaricious, that she would much rather be dressed like a poor shepherdess than spend the money allowed her by the king her father in the purchase of rich apparel befitting her rank. During all these details Charmant was suffering tortures, and could scarcely restrain his anger. "No," he argued to himself : "it is impossible that Heaven would permit so worthless a soul to inhabit this masterpiece of nature ! I admit she was badly dressed when I first saw her, but the shame she evinced proves that she was not accustomed to be so. What ! Can she be ill-tempered and coquettish with such an enchanting air of mildness and modesty ! It is not reconcilable with common sense ! I can much more easily imagine that the queen has caused her to be so slandered. She is only her stepmother, and the Princess Truitonne, her own daughter, is such an ugly creature, that it would not be extraordinary if she were envious of the most perfect of human beings."

Whilst he thus reasoned with himself the courtiers about him readily imagined, from his manner, that he was not best pleased by their abuse of Florine. One, who was more astute than the rest, in order to discover the real sentiments of the prince, changed his tone and language, and began to extol the princess wonderfully. At the first words, Charmant woke up as from a deep sleep. He entered eagerly into the conversation. His features all lighted up with joy. O love ! love ! how hard thou art to hide ! thou art visible everywhere—on a lover's lips, in his eyes, in the tone of his voice ; when we truly love, silence, conversation, happiness, or misery, are equally demonstrative of the passion which absorbs us.

The queen, impatient to learn if King Charmant was much smitten, sent for those whom she had placed in positions to acquire his confidence, and passed the rest of the night in their interrogation. Everything they reported only served to confirm the opinion she had formed that the king was in love with Florine. But how shall I describe to you the melancholy state of that poor princess ? She lay stretched on the floor in the keep of that terrible tower to which the masked ruffians had carried her. "I should be less to be pitied," said she, "if I had been immured here before I had seen that amiable monarch. The recollection of him I cherish only serves to increase my distress. I cannot doubt but that it is to prevent my seeing him again that the

queen has treated me thus cruelly. Alas, how fatal to my peace has been the little beauty it has pleased Heaven to bestow on me!" She then began to weep bitterly, so bitterly that her worst enemy would have pitied her if a witness of her affliction. Thus passed the night.

The queen, who was anxious to win over King Charmant by every attention it was in her power to pay him, sent him presents of the most costly and magnificent dresses, made in the newest fashion of that country, and the Order of the Knights of Cupid, which she had compelled the king her husband to institute the day they were married, in honour of their nuptials. The badge of it was a golden heart, enamelled flame-coloured, surrounded by several arrows, and pierced with one, with the words, "One alone wounds me." The queen had, however, for Charmant a heart cut out of a ruby, as large as an ostrich's egg; each arrow was made of a single diamond about the length of a finger, and the chain to which the badge was appended was composed of pearls, the smallest of which weighed a full pound. In short, ever since the world has been a world, there was never anything like it. Charmant, at the sight of it, was so astonished that it was some time before he spoke a word. In the meanwhile they presented to him a book, the leaves of which were of the finest vellum, beautifully illuminated, and the binding covered with gold and jewels. In it the statutes of the Order of the Knights of Cupid were written in a gallant and tender style. They told him that the princess he had seen, prayed him to be her knight, and had sent him this present. At these words he flattered himself that it came from her he loved. "How! does the lovely Princess Florine," cried he, "honour me by this splendid and flattering mark of her consideration?" "Sire," they replied, "you mistake the name; we come from the amiable Truitonne." "Truitonne! is it she who would have me be her champion?" said the king with a cold and serious air; "I regret that I cannot accept the honour; but a sovereign is not sufficiently his own master to enter into any engagements he pleases. I know the duties of a knight, and would fain fulfil them all. I would, therefore, prefer foregoing the favour she designs me, to proving myself unworthy of it." At the same time he replaced in the same corbeille,[1] the heart, the chain, and the book, and sent them all back to the queen, who, with her daughter, was ready to choke with rage at the contemptuous manner in which the illustrious foreigner had declined so especial a favour. King Charmant visited the king and queen as often as he was permitted the opportunity, in hopes of meeting Florine in the royal apartments. His eyes were everywhere in search of her. The moment he heard any one enter the room he turned sharply round towards the door, and seemed always restless and unhappy. The malicious queen easily guessed what was passing in his mind; but she appeared to take no notice of it. She talked to him only about parties of pleasure;

[1] A highly-ornamented and richly-lined basket, in which presents of honour are still on some occasions conveyed. The corbeille de mariage, in France, contains the jewellery and other gifts presented to a bride.

and he returned her the most incongruous answers. At last he asked her plainly, "Where is the Princess Florine?" "Sir," replied the queen haughtily, "the king her father has forbidden her to quit her own apartments until my daughter is married." "And what motive," inquired King Charmant, "can there be for making such a prisoner of that beautiful princess?" "I know not," said the queen; "and if I did, I should not consider myself bound to inform you."

Charmant felt his anger rising fearfully; he cast an angry glance upon Truitonne, assuring himself in his own mind that that little monster was the cause of his being deprived of the pleasure of beholding Florine, and abruptly quitted the queen's presence, which gave him too much pain.

On his return to his own apartments he requested a young prince who had accompanied him, and to whom he was much attached, to gain over, at any cost, one of the princess's attendants, in order that he might speak to Florine for one moment. The prince soon found some of the ladies of the palace whom he could venture to admit into his confidence, and one of them promised him that Florine should that very evening be at a little lower window, which looked upon the garden, and from whence she could converse with Charmant provided he was exceedingly careful that no one should be aware of it; "for," added she, "the king and queen are so severe that they will take my life if they discover I have favoured the passion of Charmant." The prince, delighted that he had so far succeeded in his mission, promised her anything she could desire, and ran to pay his court to his royal master, by announcing to him the hour of assignation; but the false confidant in the meantime went and told the queen what had occurred, and requested to know her commands. She immediately decided to place her daughter at the little window. She gave her particular instructions, and Truitonne attended to them all, notwithstanding her natural stupidity.

The night was so dark it was impossible for King Charmant to discover the imposition, even had he been less confident, so that when he drew near to the window indescribably transported with joy, he poured forth to Truitonne all the tender things he would have said to Florine, to convince her of his affection. Truitonne, profiting by the occasion, told him that she felt she was the most unfortunate person in the world, in having so cruel a stepmother; and that she should never cease to suffer all sorts of annoyances till the queen's daughter was married. Charmant assured her, that if she would accept him for her husband, he should be enchanted to share with her his heart and crown; and thereupon he drew his ring from his finger, and placing it on one of Truitonne's, he begged her to receive it as a token of eternal fidelity, and added that she had only to fix the hour for their flight. Truitonne made the best answers she could to his urgent persuasions. He noticed they were not very sensible, and the circumstance would have given him some uneasiness but that he thought it arose from the terror she was in of being surprised by the queen. He left her only on condition

that she would meet him again the next night at the same hour, which she promised faithfully to do.

The queen having heard of the happy success of this interview, felt satisfied she should obtain her ends completely. Accordingly, the day being fixed for the elopement, King Charmant prepared to carry off his beloved in a flying chariot, drawn by winged frogs, a present which had been made to him by a friend who was an enchanter. The night was excessively dark, Truitonne stole out mysteriously by a little door, and the king, who was waiting for her, received her in his arms with a hundred vows of everlasting affection. But as he was not anxious to be sailing about in his flying chariot for any long time before he married his beloved princess, he desired her to say where she would prefer their nuptials to be solemnised. She answered that she had a godmother, named Soussio, who was a very celebrated fairy, and she was of opinion they should go at once to her castle. Although the king was quite ignorant of the road, he had only to mention to his great frogs whither he wished to go. They were perfectly acquainted with the whole map of the world, and in a very short time they wafted Charmant and Truitonne to the abode of Soussio.

The castle was so brilliantly illuminated that the king would have discovered his mistake the moment he entered if the princess had not carefully enveloped herself in her veil. She inquired for her godmother, contrived to see her alone, told her how she had entrapped Charmant, and intreated her to pacify him. "Ah! my child," said the fairy; "the task will not be an easy one: he is too fond of Florine: I feel certain he will give us a great deal of trouble." In the meanwhile the king was awaiting them in a saloon, the walls of which were of diamonds so pure and transparent that through them he could see Soussio and Truitonne in conversation together. He thought he must be dreaming. "How," said he, "have I been betrayed? Have some demons brought hither this enemy of our peace? Comes she to disturb our nuptials? My dear Florine does not appear! Her father has perhaps pursued her!" He began to be the prey of a thousand distracting conjectures. But matters looked still worse, when entering the saloon, Soussio, addressing him in an authoritative tone, said, "King Charmant, here is the Princess Truitonne, to whom you have plighted your troth; she is my goddaughter, and I desire you will marry her immediately." "I!" exclaimed he; "I marry that little monster! You must think me a vastly tractable person to make such a proposition to me. I have made no promise to her whatever, and if she has told you otherwise, she has——" "Hold," interrupted Soussio, "and be not rash enough to fail in respect towards me!" "I agree," replied the king, "to respect you as much as a fairy can be respected, provided you restore to me my princess." "Am not I your princess, faithless one?" said Truitonne, showing him his ring. "To whom didst thou give this ring as a pledge of thy truth! With whom didst thou converse at the little window if not with me?" "How then!" he cried, "have I been deceived and imposed upon?" "But no, no, I will not be your dupe! What ho! What ho! my frogs! my frogs! I would

away instantly!" "Oho, it is not in your power without my consent," exclaimed Soussio. She touched him, and his feet were fastened to the floor as if they had been nailed to it. "You may stone me to death, you may flay me alive," cried the king, "but I will marry no one but Florine. I am resolved. You may therefore exercise your power upon me as you please!" Soussio tried in turn mildness, menaces, promises, prayers. Truitonne wept, shrieked, groaned, stormed, and became calm again. The king uttered not another word, looking on them both with an air of the greatest indignation; he made not the slightest answer to anything they said to him.

Twenty days and twenty nights passed without their ceasing to talk; without eating, sleeping, or sitting down. At length Soussio, quite tired and out of patience, said to the king, "Well, since you are so obstinate that you will not listen to reason, choose at once whether you will marry my goddaughter, or do penance for seven years as a punishment for breaking your word." The king, who up to this time had been perfectly silent, suddenly exclaimed, "Do what you will with me, provided I am freed from this wretch." "You are a wretch yourself," said Truitonne, in a passion. "A petty king like you, with your marsh-bred postures, to come into my country to break your word to me and insult me! Had you a groat's worth of honour in you, could you behave in this manner?" "What affecting reproaches!" said the king in an ironical tone; "Behold what a mistake it is not to take so lovely a person for one's wife!" "No, no, she shall not be your wife," screamed Soussio passionately; "you may fly out of that window if you like, for you shall be a blue bird for the next seven years!" At the same moment the king's person undergoes a total change; his arms are covered with feathers and form wings; his legs and feet become black and diminutive, and furnished with crooked talons; his body shrinks—it is all garnished with long, fine, thin feathers of celestial blue; his eyes become rounder, and bright as two stars; his nose is but an ivory beak; a white crest rises on his head in the form of a crown; he sings and talks to perfection. In this state, uttering a cry of anguish at beholding himself so metamorphosed, he flies from the fatal palace of Soussio as fast as his wings can carry him.

Overwhelmed with grief, he roams from branch to branch, selecting only the trees consecrated to love or sorrow. Now upon myrtles, now upon cypresses, he sings the most plaintive airs, in which he deplores his sad fate and that of Florine. "Where have her enemies hidden her?" said he. "What has become of that beautiful victim? Has the queen's barbarity permitted her still to breathe? Where shall I seek her? am I condemned to pass seven years without her? Perhaps during that period they will compel her to marry, and I shall lose for ever the hope on which alone I live." These various reflections afflicted the blue bird to such a degree, that he would have welcomed death.

On the other hand, the fairy Soussio sent Truitonne back to the queen, who was anxiously waiting to know how the nuptials had gone off. When she saw her daughter, and heard from her lips all that had happened, she put herself in a terrible passion,

which recoiled upon the poor Florine. "She shall repent more than once," said the queen, "her fascination of Charmant!" She ascended the tower, with Truitonne, whom she had dressed in her richest clothes, with a crown of diamonds on her head, a royal mantle, the train of which was borne by three daughters of the richest barons in the realm, and on her thumb King Charmant's ring, which Florine had noticed the day they conversed together. Florine was greatly surprised to see Truitonne in such pompous apparel. "My daughter has come to bring you a wedding present," said the queen. "King Charmant has espoused her; he loves her to distraction; never has there been such a happy couple." Thereupon they displayed to the princess heaps of gold and silver tissues, jewels, lace, and ribbons, contained in large baskets of gold filigree work. In presenting these objects, Truitonne took care Florine should see King Charmant's brilliant ring, so that not being able to doubt her misfortune, she told them, with an air of desperation, to take from her sight such fatal gifts, that she would wear nothing but black, and, indeed, that she should soon be dead. So saying, she fainted, and the cruel queen, delighted to have succeeded so well, would not permit any one to assist her, but left her alone in the most wretched state imaginable, and went and maliciously reported to the king that his daughter was so madly in love, that nothing could equal the extravagances she committed, and that great care should be taken to prevent her quitting the tower. The king told her to manage the matter exactly as she pleased, and that he should be perfectly satisfied.

When the princess recovered from her swoon, and began to reflect on the conduct they had pursued towards her, on the ill-treatment of her wicked stepmother, and the utter extinction of her hope one day to become the wife of King Charmant, her anguish became so keen that she wept the whole night long. In this wretched condition she sat at an open window uttering the most tender and touching lamentations. When day began to break she shut the window, but continued to weep. The following night she again opened the window, sobbing and sighing profoundly, and shedding a torrent of tears. Morning dawned, and she hid herself in the recesses of her chamber. In the meanwhile King Charmant, or, to speak more correctly, the beautiful blue bird, never ceased flying round the palace. He believed his dear princess was confined in it, and if her lamentations were distressing, his were no less so. He approached the windows as near as he could in order to look into the apartments; but the dread of being perceived and recognised by Truitonne prevented his doing exactly as he wished. "It would cost me my life," said he to himself. "Should these wicked princesses discover where I am they would be revenged upon me; I must keep aloof, or be exposed to the utmost peril." For these reasons he took the greatest precautions, and rarely sang except during the night. There happened to be an excessively lofty cypress immediately in front of the window at which Florine usually sat. The blue bird perched upon it, and had scarcely done so when he heard some one complaining. "How much longer shall I suffer?" said the mourner; "will not death kindly come to my aid? Those

who fear him see him too soon—I long for his coming, and he cruelly flies me. Oh, barbarous queen! what have I done to thee that thou shouldst detain me in this horrible captivity? Hast thou not ways enough to torment me? Thou hast only to make me witness of the happiness thy unworthy daughter enjoys in the society of King Charmant!" The blue bird had not lost one syllable of this complaint. He was so surprised that he awaited daylight with the greatest impatience in order to behold the afflicted lady, but before the morning dawned she had closed her window and retired. The bird, whose curiosity was awakened, failed not to return the following night. It was moonlight, and he saw a girl at a window of the tower, who commenced her lamentations. "Oh, fortune!" she exclaimed; "thou who flatteredst me with the prospect of reigning; thou who hadst restored to me a father's love; what have I done to deserve being plunged thus suddenly into the bitterest grief? Is it at so early an age as mine that mortals begin to experience thy inconstancy? Return, thou cruel one; return, if possible. The only favour I implore of thee is to end my unhappy fate!" The blue bird listened attentively, and the more he did so, the more convinced he became that it was his amiable princess who was thus bewailing. "Adorable Florine," he cried, "wonder of our days, why do you desire so speedily to terminate your own? Your misfortunes are not without remedy!"

"Ah! who speaks to me," cried she, "in such consoling language?" "An unfortunate king," replied the bird, "who loves you, and will never love any other than you." "A king who loves me!" rejoined Florine; "is this a snare set for me by my enemy? But after all, what would she gain by it? If she seeks to discover my sentiments, I am ready to own them to her frankly!" "No, my princess," replied the bird; "the lover who addresses you is incapable of betraying you"—and as he uttered these words he flew to the window. Florine was at first much alarmed at the appearance of so extraordinary a bird, who spoke with as much sense as if he had been a man, and yet in the small sweet voice of a nightingale. The beauty of his plumage, however, and the words he uttered, soon reassured her. "Am I then

permitted once more to behold you, my princess!" he exclaimed. "Can I taste of such perfect happiness and not die with joy! But, alas! how much is that happiness troubled by your captivity, and the condition to which the wicked Soussio has reduced me for seven years!" "And who are you, charming bird," inquired the princess caressing him. "You have pronounced my name," said the king, "and you pretend you do not know me?" "How! the greatest monarch in the world, King Charmant!" cried the princess; "can the little bird I hold in my hand be he?" "Alas, beautiful Florine, it is but too true!" replied the bird; "and if anything can console me, it is the feeling that I preferred this pain to that of renouncing my love for you." "For me!" said Florine; "ah, do not attempt to deceive me. I know, I know that you have married Truitonne. I recognised your ring upon her hand. I saw her blazing with the diamonds you had given to her. She came to insult me in my sad prison, wearing the rich crown and royal mantle she had received from your hands, while I was laden with chains and fetters." "You have seen Truitonne so arrayed?" interrupted the king. "She and her mother have dared to tell you those jewels came from me? Oh, Heaven! is it possible that I hear such awful falsehoods, and that I cannot instantly avenge myself on the utterers! Know that they tried to deceive me, that by a base use of your name they succeeded in causing me to carry off the ugly Truitonne;" but the instant I discovered my error I endeavoured to fly from her, and eventually preferred being a blue bird for seven long years to failing in the troth I had plighted to you."

Florine felt such lively pleasure in listening to the explanation of her amiable lover, that she no longer remembered the misery of her prison. What did she not say to him to console him under his sad circumstances, and to assure him that she would do no less for him than he had done for her! Day dawned, and the majority of the officers of the royal household had risen before the blue bird and the princess had ceased conversing. It cost them a thousand pangs to part, after agreeing that they would meet every night in the same manner.

Their delight at having found each other was so great that there are no terms in which it can be expressed. Each, on their own part, offered up their thanks to love and fortune; but Florine's happiness was alloyed by her anxiety respecting the blue bird. "Who will preserve him from the sportsman?" she asked, "or from the sharp talons of some eagle or hungry vulture, who will eat him with as much relish as if he were not a great king? Oh, Heaven! what would become of me if some of his light and delicate feathers, borne on the breeze to my window, announced to me the dreaded disaster!" This idea prevented the poor princess closing her eyes, for when one loves, fancies appear like facts, and what one would at another time think impossible, seems certain to happen; so she passed the day in tears till the hour arrived for her to return to the window.

The charming bird, hidden in a hollow tree, had been all day occupied by the

thought of his beautiful princess. "How happy I am," said he, "to have found her! How fascinating she is! How deeply I appreciate the favour she shows me!" The tender lover counted every moment of the time he was condemned to pass in the shape which prevented his marrying her, and never was the termination of a period desired more ardently. As he was anxious to pay Florine every attention in his power, he flew to the capital city of his own kingdom, alighted on his palace, entered his cabinet through a broken pane of glass in one of the windows, pounced on a pair of diamond earrings, so perfect and beautiful that none in the world could be compared to them, took them that evening to Florine, and begged her to wear them. "I would do so," she said, "if you visited me by daylight; but as I only see you at night, you must excuse me." The bird promised he would contrive to come to the tower whenever she wished; upon which she put the earrings in her ears, and the night passed in tender conversation, as the preceding had done.

The next day the blue bird returned to his kingdom, went to his palace, entered his cabinet by the broken window, and brought away the richest bracelets that had ever been seen. Each was made of a single emerald cut facet-wise, and hollowed in the middle so as to enable the wearer to pass her hands and arms through them. "Do you imagine," said the princess to him, "that my affection for you can be measured by presents? Ah, how you misjudge me!" "No, madam," replied he; "I do not believe that the trifles I offer you are necessary for the preservation of your love: but mine will not permit me to neglect the least opportunity of evincing my respect for you, and when I am absent these little trinkets will recall me to your mind." Florine said a thousand kind things to him on the subject, to which he replied by as many no less tender.

The following night the fond bird brought to his fair one a moderate sized watch, which was encased in a single pearl, the workmanship of which surpassed even the material. "It is useless to present me with a watch," said the princess sweetly. "When you are absent the hours seem endless to me, and when you are with me they pass like a dream, so that I cannot exactly measure them." "Alas, my princess," exclaimed the blue bird, "I am exactly of your mind, and am certain that I feel the pain of absence and the pleasure of return even more deeply than you do!" "After what you have suffered to keep faith with me," replied the princess, "I am bound to believe that your affection and respect cannot be carried further."

As soon as morning appeared, the bird flew back to his hollow tree, where he lived upon wild fruits. Sometimes he sang the finest airs, to the great delight of all who passed that way. They could see no one, so they fancied it must be the voice of a spirit. This opinion became so prevalent, that at last nobody dared enter the wood. A thousand fabulous adventures were related of those who had done so, and the general alarm insured the safety of the blue bird. Not a day passed without his making Florine some present, either a pearl necklace, or the most brilliant and curiously

wrought rings, diamond loops, bodkins, and bouquets of jewels in imitation of natural flowers, entertaining books, interesting medals, till at last she possessed a heap of marvellous valuables. She wore her jewels only by night to please the king, and in the daytime, having no other place to put them in, she hid them carefully in the straw of her mattress.

Two years thus passed away without Florine once complaining of her captivity. How could she? She had the gratification of conversing all night with him she loved. Never were there made so many pretty speeches. Though the bird never saw any one, and passed the whole day in a hollow tree, they had a thousand new things to tell one another. The matter was inexhaustible. Their love and their wit furnished them with abundant subjects of conversation.

In the meanwhile the malicious queen, who detained her so cruelly in prison, vainly endeavoured to marry off Truitonne. She sent ambassadors with proposals to all the princes she knew the names of: but they were bowed out almost as soon as they arrived. "If your mission was respecting the Princess Florine, you would be received with joy," was the answer; "but as for Truitonne, she may remain a vestal without any one objecting."

These tidings infuriated both mother and daughter against the innocent princess whom they persecuted. "How! does this arrogant creature continue to thwart us notwithstanding her captivity?" cried they. "Never can we forgive the injuries she has done us! She must have private correspondence with foreign governments; she is therefore guilty, at the least, of high treason. Let us act on this suspicion, and use every possible means to convict her."

They sat so late in council together on this point, that it was past midnight when they determined to ascend the tower to interrogate Florine. She was at the window with the blue bird, arrayed in all her jewels, and her beautiful hair dressed with a nicety not usual in afflicted persons. Her apartment and her bed were strewed with flowers, and some Spanish pastilles she had been burning diffused an exquisite perfume. The queen listened at the door. She fancied she heard an air sung by two persons (Florine had an almost heavenly voice), and the following words appeared to be given with great expression:—

"Oh, how wretched is our lot,
And what pangs endure we not,
Loving thus—thus forced to sever!
But, though deep indeed our woes,
In despite of cruel foes,
Our fond hearts are join'd for ever."

A few deep sighs were heard at the termination of this little concert.

"Ah, my Truitonne! we are betrayed," exclaimed the queen, suddenly opening the door and rushing into the room. Fancy the alarm of Florine at this sight! She promptly pushed open the casement, in order to give the royal bird an opportunity to fly off unperceived. She was much more anxious about his preservation than her own;

but he felt he had not the power to fly. His piercing eyes had discovered the peril to which the princess was exposed. He had caught sight of the queen and Truitonne. How great his misery to know he was not in a state to defend her! They approached her like furies bent on devouring her. "Your intrigues against the state are detected," cried the queen. "Do not imagine your rank can save you from the punishment you deserve." "Intrigues with whom, madam?" inquired the princess. "Have you not been my jailor these two years? Have I seen any other persons than those you have sent to me?" Whilst she spoke, the queen and her daughter examined her with unparalleled surprise. Her admirable beauty, and the extraordinary splendour of her attire, completely dazzled them. "And whence have you obtained, madam," said the queen, "these jewels that outshine the sun? Would you have us believe there are mines in this tower?" "I have found them," answered Florine; "that is all I know about it." The queen fixed her eyes upon Florine, with a penetrating look, endeavouring to see what was passing in the very core of her heart. "We are not your dupes," she cried; "you think you can deceive us: but, princess, we are aware of what you do from morning till night. These jewels have been given to you with the sole object of inducing you to sell your father's kingdom." "I am in a good position to deliver it up," replied Florine, with a disdainful smile; "an unfortunate princess, who has so long languished in captivity, can be of great service, certainly, in a conspiracy of such a nature." "And for whom, then," added the queen, "are your tresses so coquettishly dressed? Your apartment is so redolent of perfumes, and your attire so magnificent, that you could not be grander were you going to court." "I have plenty of time on my hands," said the princess; "it is not extraordinary I should strive to while away a few moments of it in the cares of my toilet. I pass so many in weeping over my misfortunes that the innocent occupation of the others cannot surely be a subject of reproach." "Ay, ay, indeed! let us see," said the queen, "if this innocent person is not in treaty with our enemies." She began to hunt everywhere, and coming to the mattress she emptied it, and found such an immense quantity of diamonds, pearls, rubies, emeralds, and topazes, that she could not imagine where they all came from. She had intended to hide in some place documents, the discovery of which would inculpate the princess. So when she thought nobody saw her, she was about to thrust them into the chimney, but by good luck the blue bird was perched upon it, who had eyes as sharp as a lynx, and who heard everything. "Beware, Florine!" he cried; "thy enemy is committing some treason against thee." This voice, so unexpected, frightened the queen so much, that she dared not secrete the papers. "Madam," said the princess, "you see that the spirits of the air are my friends." "I believe," exclaimed the queen, in a paroxysm of rage, "that you are leagued with demons; but, in spite of them, your father will do himself justice." "Would to heaven," cried Florine, "I had only to fear the fury of my father! but yours, madam, is much more terrible."

The queen left her, greatly disturbed by all she had seen and heard. She consulted with her friends as to what should be done to the princess. They observed that, if she were protected by some fairy or enchanter, any further persecution of her would only irritate her powerful friend, and that it would be better first to endeavour to discover the mystery. The queen approved of this idea. She sent a young girl, who affected extreme simplicity, to sleep in Florine's apartment, under the pretence that she was placed there to wait upon her. But it was not likely Florine would fall into so evident a trap. The princess looked on her, of course, as a spy, and it was impossible for her to feel more poignant affliction. "What, then! shall I never be able to converse again with the bird that is so dear to me?" said she. "He assisted me to support my misfortunes. I consoled him under his. Our affection was everything to us! What will become of him? What will become of me?" Thinking of all these things, she shed rivers of tears. She no longer dared go to the little window, though she heard the bird fluttering around it. She was dying to open it; but she feared exposing the life of her dear lover. She passed a whole month without appearing at the casement. The blue bird was in despair. What complaints did he not utter! How could he live without seeing his princess! He had never so keenly felt the pangs of absence and the misery of his metamorphosis. Vainly did he endeavour to seek out a remedy for either. After racking his brains, he could find no consolation anywhere, or in anything.

The spy, who had watched day and night for a whole month, felt quite overpowered with drowsiness, and at last sunk into a sound slumber. Florine observed it. She opened her little window and said:—

"Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!"

We give her own words, without the slightest alteration. The bird heard them so distinctly that he was at the window in an instant. What delight once more to behold each other! What a quantity of things they had to say to each other! They renewed their vows of love and fidelity a thousand and a thousand times. The princess being unable to restrain her tears, her lover was much affected, and did his best to console her. At last the hour of parting arrived, without the spy awaking, and they bade each other farewell in the most touching manner.

The next day the spy again fell asleep. The princess lost no time in placing herself at the window, and calling as before:—

"Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!"

The bird immediately arrived, and the night passed, like the preceding one, without noise or discovery, at which the lovers were delighted. They flattered themselves that the spy found so much pleasure in sleeping that she would do so every night, and, in fact, the third passed as fortunately: but on the one following the sleeper, being disturbed by some noise, listened, without appearing to be awake, and peeping as well as

she could, saw, by the light of the moon, the most beautiful bird in the world, who talked to the princess, caressed her with his claw, and pecked her gently with his bill. She overheard part of their conversation, and was exceedingly surprised; for the bird spoke like a lover, and the beautiful Florine answered him most tenderly. Day broke. They bade each other adieu; and, as if they had a presentiment of their coming misfortune, they parted with extreme sorrow. The princess threw herself on her bed, bathed in tears, and the king returned to his hollow tree. The spy ran to the queen, and told her all she had seen and heard. The queen sent for Truitonne and her confidants. They talked the matter over for a long time, and arrived at the conclusion that the blue bird was King Charmant. "What an affront!" cried the queen. "What an affront, my Truitonne! This insolent princess, whom I fancied was so wretched, was quietly enjoying the most agreeable conversation with that ungrateful prince! Oh, I will have such a terrible revenge that it shall be the talk of the whole world!" Truitonne begged her not to lose a moment, and as she considered herself more interested in the matter than the queen, she was ready to die with joy at the thought of all that would be done to destroy the happiness of the lover and his mistress.

The queen sent the spy back to the tower, ordering her not to evince any suspicion or curiosity, but to appear more sleepy than ever. She went to bed early and snored as loudly as she could. The poor, deceived princess, opening the little window, called:—

"Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!"

but in vain she called him the whole night long. He came not; for the wicked queen had caused swords, knives, razors, and daggers to be attached to the cypress-tree, so that when he flew rapidly into it, these murderous weapons cut off his feet; and he fell upon others which lacerated his wings, and wounded him so that with great difficulty he reached his own tree, leaving behind him a long track of blood. Why were you not there, lovely princess, to comfort that royal bird? And yet it would have been the death of her to have seen him in so deplorable a condition. He took no care to save his life, persuaded that it was Florine who had been guilty of this cruel treachery. "Oh, barbarous princess!" he exclaimed mournfully, "is it thus thou repayest the most pure and tender passion that ever was or will be! If thou wouldst that I should die, wherefore didst thou not thyself perform the deed! Death had been sweet from thy hand! I sought thee with so much love and confidence—I suffered for thee, and suffered without complaining; and thou hast sacrificed me to the most cruel of women, our common enemy! Thou hast made thy peace with her at the price of my life! It is thou, Florine—thou who hast stabbed me! Thou hast borrowed the hand of Truitonne, and guided it to my bosom!" This fatal idea overwhelmed him, and he resolved to die.

But his friend the enchanter, who had seen the flying frogs return with the car, but

without the king, was so troubled to think what had become of him, that he went eight times round the world in search of him. He was on a ninth journey for the same purpose, when, in passing through the wood in which the poor king was lying, he, according to his usual custom, blew a long blast on his horn, and then cried five times, in a loud voice, "King Charmant!—King Charmant! where art thou?" The king recognised the voice of his best friend. "Approach," he cried, "this tree, and behold the wretched king you love, bathed in his blood!" The enchanter, much surprised, looked about him everywhere, without seeing any one. "I am a blue bird," exclaimed the king, in a feeble and plaintive voice. At these words the enchanter found him, without more trouble, in his little nest. Another person might have been more astonished, but he was versed in every portion of the necromantic art. It cost him but a few words to staunch the blood which was fast flowing; and with some herbs he found in the wood, and over which he muttered a short spell, he cured the king as perfectly as if he had never been wounded.

He then begged he would inform him through what adventure he had become a bird, and who had wounded him so cruelly. The king satisfied his curiosity, and told him that it must have been Florine who had revealed the amorous mystery of the secret visits he paid her, and who, to make her peace with the queen, had consented to have the cypress-tree filled with the daggers and razors which had hacked him almost to pieces. He exclaimed a thousand times against the treachery of the princess, and said he should have been happy if he had died before he had known the wickedness of her heart. The magician inveighed against her, and against all the sex: he advised the king to forget her. "What a misfortune it would be," said he, "if you could continue to love the ungrateful girl! After what she has been guilty of towards you, one has everything to fear from her." The blue bird could not remain long of that opinion; he still loved Florine too dearly: and the enchanter, who knew his real sentiments, notwithstanding the pains he took to conceal them, said to him gaily:—

"Crush'd by Fortune's cruel blow,
Vainly Reason's voice is heard;
We but listen to our woe,
Death to sage or soothing word.
Leave old Time his work to do;
All things have their sunny side;
But till he turns it to our view,
Nought but darkness is descried."

The royal bird admitted the truth of the remark, and begged his friend to take him home and to put him in a cage, where he would be safe from a cat's paw, or any murderous weapon. "But," said the enchanter, "will you still remain five years in a condition so deplorable, and so little suited to your duties and your dignity? For, remember, you have enemies who assert that you are dead. They would seize your kingdom. I much fear you will lose it before you regain your proper form." "Can I not," asked the king, "enter my palace, and govern as I used to do?" "Oh,"

exclaimed his friend, "the case is altered! Those who would obey a man, will not bow to a parrot: those who feared you while a king, surrounded by grandeur and pomp, would be the first to pluck out all your feathers, now you are a little bird." "Alas, for human weakness!" cried the king. "Although a brilliant exterior is as nothing compared to merit and virtue, it still possesses a power over the minds of men which it is difficult to combat. Well," continued he, "let us be philosophers, and despise that which we cannot obtain: our lot will be none the worse for it." "I do not give up a point so easily," said the magician; "I still hope to hit upon some means for your restoration."

Florine—the wretched Florine—in despair at no longer seeing the king, passed her days and nights at the window, repeating unceasingly:—

"Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!"

The presence of her watchful attendant did not prevent her; her despair was so great that she was careless of consequences. "What has become of you, King Charmant?' she cried. "Have our mutual enemies caused you to feel the cruel effects of their rage? Have you fallen a sacrifice to their fury? Alas, alas! are you no more? Shall I never again behold you? or, weary of my woes, have you abandoned me to my hard fate?" What tears, what sobs followed these tender complaints! How did the absence of so dear and so amiable a lover lengthen the dreary hours of her captivity! The princess, oppressed, ill, thin, and sadly altered, could scarcely sustain herself; she felt convinced that everything most fatal had occurred to the king.

The queen and Truitonne triumphed. Their revenge gave them more pleasure than the offence had caused them annoyance. And what was this offence, after all? King Charmant had refused to marry a little monster he had a thousand reasons to hate. In the meantime Florine's father, who had reached a considerable age, fell ill and died. The fortunes of the wicked queen and her daughter assumed a new aspect. They were looked upon as favourites, who had abused their influence. The people rose, and ran in a body to the palace, demanding the Princess Florine, whom alone they would recognise as their sovereign. The enraged queen endeavoured to carry matters with a high hand; she appeared in a balcony, and threatened the insurgents. The revolt became general; they broke into her apartments, pillaged them, and stoned her to death! Truitonne fled for protection to her godmother, the fairy Soussio, or she would have shared the fate of her mother. The grandees of the kingdom met immediately, and ascended the tower, where the princess was lying very ill. She knew neither of the death of her father, nor of the punishment of her enemy. When she heard the noise of persons approaching, she had no doubt but that they were coming to lead her to death. She was not in the least alarmed, for life had become hateful to her since she had lost the blue bird. Her subjects, flinging themselves at her feet, informed her of the happy change in her fortunes. She was quite indifferent to it. They carried her to the palace and crowned

her. The great care that was taken of her health, and her own desire to seek out the blue bird, combined to restore her, and she was soon enabled to nominate a council to govern the kingdom during her absence. She then provided herself with jewels to the value of a thousand millions of francs, and set out on her journey one night quite alone, without any one's knowing whither she was gone. The enchanter, who managed the affairs of King Charmant, not having sufficient power to undo what Soussio had done, decided upon seeking her and proposing some arrangement, under favour of which she would restore the king to his natural form. He ordered out his frogs and flew to the fairy, who was at that moment in conversation with Truitonne. Enchanters and fairies are on an equal footing. These two had known each other for five or six hundred years, and during that time had quarrelled and made it up again a thousand times at least. She received him very politely. "What would my gossip?" said she (it is thus they all address one another). "Is there anything in my power that I can do for him?" "Yes, gossip," answered the magician, "you can do everything I desire: it concerns one of my best friends, a king whom you have made very unhappy." "Aha! I understand you, gossip!" cried Soussio. "I'm very sorry, but he has no mercy to hope for, unless he consent to marry my goddaughter. There she is in all her beauty, as you may see. Let him consider of it."

The enchanter was almost struck dumb at the sight of her, so hideous did she appear to him; nevertheless he could not resolve to leave without coming to something like an agreement with Soussio, for the king had run a thousand risks since he had lived in a cage. The nail on which the cage had been suspended had broken, and the cage, of course, had fallen to the ground with a severe shock to his feathered majesty. Minet, the cat, who happened to be in the room when this accident happened, gave the poor king a scratch on the eye, which nearly deprived him of the sight of it. On another occasion, they had neglected to give him any fresh water, and he barely escaped having the pip. A little rogue of a monkey, who had got loose, caught hold of some of his feathers through the bars of the cage, and spared him as little as he would have done a jay or a blackbird. But the worst of all was, that he was on the point of losing his kingdom. His heirs were daily trumping up some stories to prove he was dead. So, finally, the enchanter came to an understanding with his gossip Soussio, that she should bring Truitonne to King Charmant's palace, where she should reside for some months, which time the king should be allowed to make up his mind to marry her, and that during that period Soussio would permit him to resume his original form, with the proviso that he should become a bird again if he ultimately refused to espouse her goddaughter.

The fairy presented Truitonne with some magnificent dresses, all of gold and silver, then seated her on a pillion behind herself on a dragon, and proceeded directly to the kingdom of Charmant, whom they found there with his faithful friend the enchanter. Three taps of Soussio's wand, and King Charmant was again the handsome, amiable,

intelligent, and munificent sovereign he had been before his transformation; but dearly bougnt was the reprieve accorded to him. The mere thought of marrying Truitonne made him shudder. The enchanter reasoned w th him as well as he was able, but made little impression on his mind. The king was less occupied with the government of his dominions, than with devising means to prolong the period Soussio had allowed should elapse previous to his marriage with Truitonne.

In the meanwhile Queen Florine, disguised as a peasant, with her hair all dishevelled and hanging about her ears to conceal her features, a straw hat on her head, and a sack upon her shoulder, proceeded on her journey, sometimes walking, sometimes riding, now by sea, now by land, making all possible haste; but not being certain of her road, fearing every turn she took might be in the wrong direction, and lead her from her amiable monarch instead of towards him. One day that she had stopped to rest he self beside a fountain, whose silvery waters flowed leaping over the little pebbles, she thought she would take that opportunity of washing her feet. She accordingly sat down upon the grassy bank, tied up her fair locks with a ribbon, and put her feet into the little stream. She looked like Diana bathing on her return from the chase. A little old woman, who, bent almost double and leaning on a stout stick, was passing that way, stopped, and said to her, "What are you doing there, my pretty girl, all a one by yourself?" "My good mother," answered the queen, "I have plenty of company, for I am beset by sorrows, anxieties, and misfortunes!" and at these words her eyes filled with tears. "How! so young and weeping?" said the good woman "Ah, my child, do not give way to sorrow; tell me truly what is the matter, and I hope I may be able to comfort you." The queen willingly told her all her misfortunes, the conduct of the fairy Soussio, and how she was at present in quest of the blue bird.

The little old woman drew herself up as straight as possible, changed suddenly her whole app arance, became lovely, young, and superbly attired, and smiling graciously on the queen, said, "Incomparable Florine, the king you seek is no longer a bird; my sister Soussio has restored him to his former shape. He is in his own kingdom. Do not afflict yourself; you will reach it, and succeed in your design. Here are four eggs, break one of them whenever you are most in need of assistance, and you will find in it what will be useful." As she ended these words she disappeared. Florine felt much consoled by what she had heard; she put the eggs in her sack, and resumed her journey towards the kingdom of Charmant.

After walking eight days and nights without stopping, she arrived at the foot of a mountain, prodigiously high, all of ivory, and so steep that one could not keep one's footing upon it. She made a thousand vain attempts, slipping down every time, till, tired out, and in despair at meeting with so insurmountable an obstacle, she laid herself down at the bottom of the mountain, detern ined to die there, when she recollected the eggs the fairy had given her.

She took one out of her sack. "Let us see," she said, "if the giver was not making



26993

game of me when she promised that I should find help in them in my need!" She broke it, and found inside some little golden cramps, which she fastened on her hands and feet. By the aid of them she climbed up the ivory mountain without the least trouble, for the points of the cramps entered the ivory, and prevented her slipping. When she had reached the top, she found herself in equal difficulty respecting the descent. All the valley was one sheet of looking-glass, around which upwards of sixty thousand women were standing and admiring themselves in it extremely, for this looking-glass was full two leagues in breadth, and six in height. Every one appeared in it exactly as they wished to be. The carroty-haired seemed to have locks of gold; a bad, coarse brown appeared a glossy raven black. The old looked young--the young never looked older; in fine, no fault could be seen in this wonderful mirror, and consequently it was resorted to by the fair sex from all parts of the world. It was enough to make you die of laughing to see the airs and graces the majority of these coquettes gave themselves. Nor were the men less eager to consult this magical mirror, which was equally pleasing to them. To some it seemed to give fine curly hair, to others taller stature or better shape, a more martial mien or a nobler deportment; the ladies they laughed at laughed at them no less in return; so that the mountain was called by a thousand different names. No one had ever been able to get to the top of it, and therefore when Florine appeared on the summit, the ladies uttered shrieks of despair. "Where is that mad creature going?" they cried. "No doubt she knows how to walk upon glass, or the first step she takes she will break our mirror to pieces!" Upon which arose a terrible hubbub. The queen knew not what to do, for she saw the imminent danger of descending by that road. She broke another egg, out of which issued two pigeons attached to a car, which at the same time became sufficiently large for her to seat herself in it comfortably. The pigeons then gently descended with the queen, and alighted at the bottom without the least accident. "My little friends," said she to them, "if you will convey me to the spot where King

Charmant holds his court, you will not oblige an ungrateful person." The civil and obedient pigeons rested neither day nor night till they arrived at the gates of the city. Florine alighted, and gave each of them a sweet kiss, worth more than a royal diadem.

Oh, how her heart beat as she entered the city! She stained her face that she might not be recognised. She inquired of some passengers where she could see the king. Some of them began to laugh at her. "See the king!" said they; "ho! what dost thou want with him, my young slut? Go, go, and clean yourself! your eyes are not worthy the sight of such a monarch." The queen made no reply, but passed on quietly, and asked the next persons she met the same question—Where should she place herself in order to see the king? "He is to go to the temple to-morrow with the Princess Truitonne, for he has at last consented to espouse her," was the answer.

"Heavens! what tidings! Truitonne, the worthless Truitonne, on the eve of marriage with the king! Florine felt dying! she had no longer power to speak or move. She sank down on a heap of stones under a gateway, her face covered by her dishevelled hair and her large straw hat. "Unfortunate creature that I am!" cried she; "I have come hither but to swell the triumph of my rival, and witness her delight! It was for her, then, the blue bird deserted me! It was for this little monster that he was guilty of the most cruel inconstancy! While, plunged in grief, I trembled for his life, the traitor had already changed, and thinking no more of me than if he had never seen me, left me to lament his absence without a sigh!" When people are very miserable, they rarely have much appetite, so the poor queen sought out a lodging for the night, and went to bed without any supper. She rose with the sun, and hastened to the temple. After repeated rebuffs from the soldiers and attendants, she succeeded in obtaining admission. There she saw the king's throne and that of Truitonne, whom the people already looked upon as queen. What affliction for so fond, so sensitive a creature as Florine! She approached the throne of her rival, and stood there leaning against a marble pillar. The king arrived first, looking more handsome and more fascinating than ever. Truitonne followed him, richly attired, and ugly enough to frighten everybody. She frowned on perceiving the queen. "Who art thou, "said she, "to dare thus approach our august person and our golden throne?" "I am called Mie Souillon," replied Florine; "I come from a great distance to sell you some curiosities!" and so saying, she took out of her sack the emerald bracelets which King Charmant had given to her. "Aha!" said Truitonne, "these are pretty glass ornaments. Will you take a five-sous piece for them?" "Show them, madam, to some connoisseur," said the queen, "and then we will make our bargain." Truitonne, who was as fond of the king as such a creature could be, and delighted to have a reason for addressing him, approached his throne, and showed him the bracelets, requesting his opinion of their value. The sight of them immediately recalled to him those he had given to Florine. He turned pale, sighed, and remained for some time without speaking; at length, fearing the observations that might be made upon the agitation his

conflicting emotions had occasioned, he made an effort to compose himself, and answered, "I believe these bracelets to be worth almost as much as my kingdom. I imagined there was but one such pair in the world; but here is certainly another very like it." Truitonne returned to her throne, seated on which she looked less noble than an oyster in its shell. She asked the queen what was the least price she set upon the bracelets. "You would find it difficult to pay, madam," she answered; "I had better propose to you another sort of bargain. If you will obtain permission for me to sleep one night in the cabinet of echoes, which is in the king's palace, I will make you a present of my emeralds." "Willingly, Mie Souillon!" said Truitonne, laughing like an idiot, and showing teeth longer than the tusks of a wild boar.

The king made no inquiry as to whence the bracelets came, less from indifference to the person by whom they were presented (indeed, her appearance was not such as to inspire much curiosity), than from the invincible repugnance he felt to Truitonne. Now, it is fit you should know that while he was a blue bird, he had told the Princess Florine that beneath his apartments there was a cabinet, which was called the cabinet of echoes, so ingeniously constructed that the slightest whispers uttered therein could be heard by the king when reposing in his bedchamber; and as Florine's intention was to reproach him for his inconstancy, she could not have imagined a better method.

She was conducted to the cabinet by order of Truitonne, and immediately began her complaints and lamentations.

"The misfortune I would fain have doubted is but too certain, cruel blue bird!" she cried. "Thou hast forgotten me! Thou lovest my unworthy rival. The bracelets which I received from thy disloyal hand could awake no remembrance of me, so entirely hast thou banished me from thy recollection!" Her sobs here choked her utterance, and when she was again able to speak, she resumed her lamentations, and continued them till daybreak. The king's valets-de-chambre, who had heard her moan and sigh all night long, told Truitonne, who inquired why she had made such a disturbance. The queen answered that when she slept soundly she was in the habit of dreaming, and often talked aloud in her sleep. As to the king, by a strange fatality he had not heard her. Since he had been so deeply in love with Florine, he never could sleep, so that when he went to bed they gave him a dose of opium, in order to obtain for him some repose.

The queen passed a part of the day in great anxiety. "If he heard me," thought she, "there never yet was such cruel indifference. If he did not hear me, how shall I manage to make him do so?" She possessed no more extraordinary curiosities; she had plenty of beautiful jewels; but it was necessary to find something which should particularly take the fancy of Truitonne. She therefore had recourse to her eggs. She broke one, and out of it came immediately a coach of polished steel, inlaid with gold, drawn by six green mice, driven by a rose-coloured rat, and the postillion, who was also

one of the rat tribe, was of a greyish violet colour. In the coach sat four puppets, more lively and sprightly than any that were ever seen at the fairs of St. Germain or St. Laurent. They could do all sorts of wonderful things, particularly two little gipsies, who, for dancing a saraband or a jig, would not have yielded the palm to Leance.[1]

The queen stood enraptured at the sight of this new masterpiece of necromantic art. She remained perfectly quiet till the evening, which was the time Truitonne usually took an airing. She posted herself in one of the walks, and set the mice galloping with the coach, rats, and puppets. This novelty so astonished Truitonne, that she called out two or three times—"Mie Souillon! Mie Souillon! will you take five sous for your coach and set of mice?" "Ask the men of letters and learned doctors of this kingdom," said Florine, "what such a wonder is worth, and I will abide by the valuation of the best judge." Truitonne, who was imperative about everything, replied, "Without offending me longer by thy filthy presence, tell me the price." "All I ask," said Florine, "is to sleep again in the cabinet of echoes." "Go, poor idiot," answered Truitonne, "thou shalt have thy wish;" and, turning to her ladies-in-waiting, "There's a stupid creature," said she, "to reap no greater advantage from such curiosities!"

Night came. Florine uttered all the most touching reproaches she could think of; but as vainly as before, for the king never omitted taking his opium. The valets de-chambre said to one another: "That country wench must surely be mad! What is she muttering about all night?" "Notwithstanding," observed some, "there is both reason and feeling in what she says." She waited impatiently for morning, to ascertain what effect her words had produced. "What," she cried, "has this barbarous man become deaf to my voice? Will he no longer listen to his dear Florine? Oh, how weak am I to love him still! How well do I deserve the scorn with which he treats me!" But in vain did she so reason; she could not divest herself of her affection for him.

There was but one more egg left in her sack, to afford her further assistance. She broke it, and out came a pie composed of six birds, which were larded, dressed, and quite ready for eating; yet, nevertheless, sang admirably, told fortunes, and knew more about medicine than Æsculapius himself. The queen was enchanted at the sight of such a wonderful affair, and carried her talking-pie into Truitonne's antechamber. While waiting for her to pass, one of the king's valets-de-chambre came up to her and

[1] The fairs of St. Germain and St. Laurent were two of the principal fairs in Paris, and their theatres and puppet shows were much frequented. To the "Théâtre de la Foire" we are indebted for the French "Opera Comique," and the creation of those charming "Folies Dramatiques," which I have attempted to imitate in my extravaganzas. The principal puppet-show was that of Brioché, who is said to have been the inventor of "Les Marionettes." He is mentioned by Boileau in his Seventh Epistle: "Non loin de la place où Brioché preside," which was in the Rue Mazarine. It is of him Leander, in the next story (Prince Sprite) buys the monkeys (*vid* p. 74). The name of Leance does not occur in the earliest list of dancers I have seen, or amongst those mentioned by the Marquis de Dangeau in his Diary; I am therefore in doubt whether Madame d'Aulnoy alludes to a celebrated ballet-dancer or an equally popular puppet. The saraband was a dance introduced into Spain by the Moors. The jig, from the Teutonic gieg, a fiddle, though of English invention, was adopted in most European nations.

said, "My friend, Mie Souillon, are you aware that if the king did not take opium to make him sleep, you would disturb him dreadfully? for you chatter all night long in the most extraordinary manner."

Florine was no longer surprised that the king had not heard her: she took a handful of jewels out of her sack, and said, "I fear so little interrupting the king's repose, that if you will prevent his taking opium to-night presuming that I sleep in the cabinet of echoes, all these pearls and diamonds shall be yours." The valet-de-chambre consented, and gave her his word on the matter.

A few minutes afterwards, Truitonne arrived. She perceived the queen, with her pie, which she pretended to be eating. "What dost thou there, Mie Souillon?" said Truitonne to her. "Madam," replied Florine, "I am eating astrologers, musicians, and physicians." At the same moment all the birds began to sing more melodiously than sirens, and then to cry, "Give us a piece of silver, and we'll tell you your fortune." A duck that was particularly prominent, called out, in a voice louder than any of the others, "Quack! quack! quack! quack! I am a physician; I cure all disorders and every sort of madness, except that of love." Truitonne, more surprised at so many wonders than ever she had been in her life, vowed it was an excellent pie, and that she would have it. "Come, come, Mie Souillon, what shall I give thee for it?" "The usual price," answered Florine; "permission to sleep in the cabinet of echoes—nothing more." "Hold!" said Truitonne generously (for she was in a capital humour, in consequence of her acquisition of such a pie), "thou shalt have a pistole into the bargain." Florine, happier than she had yet been, in the hope that the king would at length hear her, took her leave of Truitonne with many thanks.

As soon as night came she requested to be conducted to the cabinet, ardently hoping that the valet-de-chambre would keep his word, and that, instead of giving the king his opium draught, he would substitute for it something that would keep his majesty awake. When she thought everybody else was asleep, she began her usual lamentations. "To how many perils have I exposed myself," she said, "in search of thee; whilst thou hast fled from me, and wouldst marry Truitonne! What have I done to thee, thou cruel one, that thou shouldst thus forget thy vows? Remember thy metamorphosis, my favours, and our tender conversations!" She repeated them nearly all, her memory sufficiently proving that nothing was dearer to her than such recollections.

The king was not asleep, and so distinctly heard the voice of Florine, and every word she uttered, that he could not imagine whence they proceeded; but his heart, penetrated with tenderness, recalled to him so vividly the person of his incomparable princess, that he felt his separation from her as keenly as he did at the moment the knives had wounded him in the cypress-tree. He began to speak aloud on his part, as the queen had done on hers. "Ah, princess," said he, "too cruel to a lover who adored you! Is it possible that you can have sacrificed me to our mutual enemies?" Florine heard what he said, and failed not to answer him, and to inform him that, if he

would grant Mie Souillon an audience, he would be enlightened respecting all the mysteries which hitherto he had been unable to penetrate. At these words, the impatient king called one of his valets-de-chambre, and asked him if he could find Mie Souillon, and bring her to him. The valet-de-chambre replied that nothing could be more easy, as she was sleeping in the cabinet of echoes.

The king knew not what to think. How could he believe so great a queen as Florine was disguised as a scullion? And yet, how could he imagine that Mie Souillon had the voice of the queen, and was in possession of such particular secrets, if she were not Florine herself? In this uncertainty he arose and dressed himself in the greatest hurry, and descended by a back staircase to the door of the cabinet of echoes, out of which the queen had taken the key: but the king had a master-key which unlocked every door throughout the palace.

He found her arrayed in a light robe of white taffety, which she wore beneath her coarse disguise, her beautiful hair falling about her shoulders. She was lying on a couch, and a lamp at some distance shed on the scene but a feeble light. The king entered suddenly, and his love getting the better of his anger, the moment he recognised her he flung himself at her feet, bathed her hands with his tears, and felt ready to die with joy, grief, and the thousand different thoughts that rushed at once into his mind.

The queen was not less moved. Her heart seemed to stop beating; she could scarcely breathe. She looked earnestly at the king without saying a word, and when she found strength to speak to him, she had no power to reproach him, the joy of beholding him again made her forget, for the time, the cause of complaint she imagined she had against him. At length, they mutually explained, and justified themselves. Their affection revived stronger than ever, and all that embarrassed them was the fairy Soussio. But at this moment the enchanter, who was so fond of the king, arrived with a famous fairy, no other than she who gave the four eggs to Florine. After the first compliments had passed between them, the enchanter and the fairy declared that their power

being united in favour of the king and queen, Soussio could do nothing against them, and that consequently their marriage would take place without delay.

We may readily imagine the delight of these two young lovers. As soon as it was day the news was spread throughout the palace, and everybody was enchanted to see Florine. The tidings reached Truitonne. She ran to the king's apartments. What was her surprise to find there her beautiful rival! The moment she attempted to open her mouth to abuse her, the enchanter and the fairy appeared, and changed her into a sow, which being called Truie in French, she still retained part of her name, and her natural disposition to grumble. She ran out of the room grunting, and thence into the kitchen courtyard, where the long peals of laughter with which she was received completed her despair.

King Charmant and Queen Florine, delivered from so odious a person, now thought only of the nuptial fête, the taste and magnificence of which were equally conspicuous.

It is easy to conceive how great was their happiness after passing through such prolonged misfortunes.

"When Truitonne would have forced that monarch charming
To tie a knot which death alone could sunder,
Regardless of the consequence alarming,
She certainly committed a great blunder.
'Tis possible she did not know, a marriage
Unblest by mutual love is wretched slavery.
But Charmant's bold, uncompromising carriage,
Showed as much prudence, I conceive, as bravery.
Better to be a bird of any hue—
A raven, crow, an owl—I do protest,
Than tie yourself for life a partner to
Who either scorns you, or whom you detest.
Too many matches of this sort I've seen,
And wish that now there were some kind magician
To step such ill-assorted souls between,
With power to enforce his prohibition,
Vigilant ever to forbid the banns
Where selfish feelings true affection slighted,
And ne'er allowing Hymen to join hands,
When hearts had not been first by love united."

# PRINCE SPRITE

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who had but one son, whom they were passionately fond of, though he was exceedingly deformed. He was as fat as the biggest man, at the same time that he was as short as the smallest dwarf; but the ugliness of his face and the deformity of his body were nothing in comparison with the malignity of his disposition. He was an obstinate brute, who caused the misery of every one about him. The king had observed this from the prince's earliest infancy; but the queen doted upon him, and made him much worse by her outrageous indulgence, which too plainly indicated the power he possessed over her. To find favour in the eyes of this princess, it was necessary to vow that her son was both handsome and witty. She was desirous to give him a name that would inspire respect and fear. After long consideration she called him Furibon.

When he was of an age to require a tutor, the king selected a prince who had a dormant claim to the crown, which he might have maintained like a brave man had not his estates fallen into decay. As it was, he had long ceased to think of it, and applied himself solely to the education of an only son.

Never was there a youth blessed with a finer disposition. High-spirited, and yet most tractable, there was a peculiar felicity and grace in his every expression. In person he was perfect.

The king having chosen the father of this young nobleman to train up Furibon, expressly commanded the prince to be very obedient to him; but Furibon was so stubborn that a hundred floggings would not cure him of a single fault. His tutor's son was named Leander, and everybody loved him. He was a great favourite with the ladies; but he attached himself to no one in particular. They called him "The handsome indifferent." All these attacks upon him failed to produce any change in his manner. He rarely quitted Furibon, and that association served but to make the latter appear more hideous. The little brute never spoke to a lady but to utter some rudeness. Sometimes he would find fault with their dress. Sometimes he would tell them their manners were coarse and countrified. He would accuse them publicly of being painted, and eagerly carried every scandalous story he could pick up about them to the queen, who would not only reprimand them severely, but make them fast by way of punishment.

All this caused them mortally to hate Furibon; this he perceived, and generally resented it on the young Leander. "You are vastly happy," said he, looking at him askance: "the women praise and applaud you; they are not so indulgent to me." "My lord," said Leander modestly, "their respect for you prevents such familiarity." "They are quite right," rejoined Furibon; "I should beat them into a jelly to teach them their duty."

One day, some ambassadors having arrived at the court from a far country, the prince, accompanied by Leander, went into a gallery to see them pass. As soon as the envoys saw Leander they advanced towards him with profound salutations, evincing by signs their admiration. Then observing Furibon they took him for his dwarf, laid hold of him by the arm, and turned him round and round in spite of all his resistance. Leander was in despair. He exhausted himself with his efforts to make them understand that it was the king's son they were treating so unceremoniously, but all in vain; and unfortunately the interpreter was awaiting them in the hall of audience. Finding that they did not comprehend his signs, Leander humbled himself still more before Furibon; but the ambassadors as well as the persons in their suite, imagining this was in jest, laughed till they were almost in fits, and filliped the prince on his nose, after the fashion of their own country. Furibon, transported with rage, drew his little sword, which was not longer than a lady's fan, and had certainly done some mischief had not the king advanced to meet the ambassadors, and to his great surprise observed the commotion. He apologised to them, for he spoke their language. They answered him that it was of no consequence; that they saw clearly the hideous little dwarf was out of temper. The king was greatly chagrined that the ugliness and folly of his son had occasioned such a mistake.

As soon as Furibon was left alone with Leander he seized him by the hair and tore out two or three handfuls. He would have strangled him if he had had the power, and forbade him ever to appear again in his presence. Leander's father, offended at Furibon's conduct, sent his son to a château he had in the country. He was not at a loss for amusement. He was fond of hunting, fishing, and walking; he could draw from nature, read much, and played on several instruments. He rejoiced he was no longer obliged to pay court to a capricious prince; and, notwithstanding the solitude in which he lived, never knew a moment's dulness.

One day, after walking a long time in his gardens, as the heat increased, he entered a little wood, the trees of which were so high and so leafy that they afforded a very agreeable shade. He began to divert himself by playing on the flute, when he felt something twine itself about his leg very tightly, and on looking down, discovered to his surprise a large adder. He took out his handkerchief, and catching the reptile by its head, he was about to kill it; but it twisted itself round his arm, and, fixing its eyes upon him, seemed to crave for mercy. One of his gardeners coming up at the time, no sooner saw the adder than he called out to his master, "Hold it fast, my lord, I have

been hunting it for an hour, in order to kill it. It is the most cunning creature in the world, and does desperate mischief in the flower-beds." Leander looked again on the adder, which was spotted with a thousand extraordinary colours, and still gazed at him earnestly without making any effort to defend itself. "As you would have killed it (said he to the gardener), and it ran to me for protection, I forbid you to do it any injury. I shall feed it, and when it has cast its beautiful skin I shall let it go." He returned to the château, and put the adder into a large room, of which he kept the key, and had bran, milk, flowers, and herbs provided for it to feed on and sport with.

Here was a happy adder for you. Occasionally he paid it a visit. The moment it perceived him it crept to meet him, with all the pretty airs and graces that an adder is capable of. The prince was rather surprised at it, but, nevertheless, did not pay much attention to the circumstance. All the ladies of the court lamented his absence. They talked of nothing but Leander, and wished him back again. "Alas," said they, "there are no more pleasures at court now Leander has left it. That wicked Furibon was the cause of his departure. Must he needs hate Leander because he is more amiable and more beloved than himself? Must Leander dislocate his own bones, and split his mouth from ear to ear in order to resemble him? Screw up his eyes and pull off his nose to gratify this little baboon? who will never be happy as long as he lives, for he will never find any one so ugly as he is."

However wicked princes may be, they will always have flatterers, and, indeed, those who are wicked find more parasites than the others. Furibon had his share: his influence over the mind of the queen made them fear him. They told him what the ladies said of him, and put him almost into a frenzy with passion. He rushed into the queen's chamber in this state, and vowed he would kill himself before her eyes, if she did not instantly find some means of destroying Leander. The queen, who hated the poor youth because he was handsomer than her monkey of a son, replied that she had long looked upon Leander as a traitor, that she would willingly put him to death with her own hand. She advised Furibon to go out hunting with the most trustworthy of his confidants, that Leander would join the chase, and that then they might teach him how to make himself loved by everybody. Furibon accordingly went out hunting. When Leander heard the hounds and horns in the wood, he mounted his horse and rode to see who the hunters were. He was much surprised at meeting suddenly the prince. He dismounted and saluted him respectfully. Furibon received him more graciously than he could have hoped, and bade him follow in his suite. At the same time, turning to the assassins, he made signs to them to make sure of their blow. He then galloped away, when suddenly a lion of an enormous size rushed out of a cavern, and springing upon him pulled him to the ground. His attendants fled in every direction, leaving Leander alone to combat the furious animal. Sword in hand, he advanced at the hazard of being torn to pieces, and by his courage and skill rescued his most cruel enemy. Furibon had fainted with terror; Leander used every means to revive and

reassure him, and as soon as he was sufficiently recovered, offered him his own horse to ride home on. Any one but a monster of ingratitude would have been touched to his heart's core by such great and recent services, and acknowledged them nobly both by words and deeds. Not so Furibon. He did not even deign to look on Leander, and availed himself of his horse but to rally the assassins, and ordered them instantly to despatch him. They surrounded Leander, and he must infallibly have been slain but for his undaunted courage. He placed his back against a tree in order to avoid being attacked from behind, and, not sparing one of his enemies, laid about him desperately. Furibon, believing he must be killed, hastened to enjoy the sight of his dead body; but a very different spectacle met his eyes. The villains were all stretched on the earth in their last agonies, and Leander advancing, said to him, "My lord, if it was by your order these men attacked me, I regret that I defended myself." "You are an insolent traitor," answered the prince in a rage, "and if ever you again appear in my presence, I will have you put to death."

Leander made no reply. He returned home very sorrowful, and passed the night in thinking what he ought to do, for there was no likelihood of his being able to make a stand against the king's son. He resolved to go abroad and see the world: but when he was just ready to start upon his travels, he remembered the adder, and took to it some milk and some fruit. On opening the door he perceived an extraordinary light shining in a corner of the room, and to his great astonishment beheld a lady, whose noble and majestic air left no doubt of the greatness of her birth. Her dress was of amaranth satin, bordered with diamonds and pearls. She advanced towards him with a gracious smile, and said, "Young prince, seek not for the adder you brought hither, it is no longer here; you behold me in its place, to discharge the debt it owes you: but to speak to you more intelligibly, know that I am the fairy Gentille, celebrated for the amusing and dexterous feats I know how to perform. Our race live a hundred years without growing old, without maladies, without fears or pains. At the expiration of that period, we become adders for the space of a week. It is only during that time that we are in any danger, for then we can neither foresee nor prevent misfortunes, and if we were killed we should never come to life again. The week ended, we return to our usual shapes, with renewed beauty, power and treasures. You now, my lord, can understand the obligations I am under to you. It is but just I should repay them. Think how I can be useful to you, and depend upon my friendship."

The young prince, who had never before held any communication with fairies, was so astonished, that it was some time before he could speak. But at length, making her a profound bow, "Madam," said he, "after the honour I have enjoyed of being of service to you, it appears to me I have nothing more to desire of fortune." "I shall be very sorry," replied she, "if you do not put me in the way of rendering you some service. Consider that I have the power to make you a great king, to prolong your life, to make

you still more amiable, to give you mines full of diamonds and houses full of gold. I can make you an excellent orator, poet, musician and painter, the idol of the women; render your nature more ethereal, make you a spirit of air, water and earth." Leander interrupted her at this point. "Permit me, madam, to ask you," said he, "what advantage should I derive from becoming a spirit?" "It would enable you to do a thousand useful and agreeable things," replied the fairy. "You are invisible whenever you please, you traverse in an instant the vast expanse of the universe, you rise in the air without wings, you descend to the centre of the earth without dying, you plunge into the depths of the ocean without being drowned, you enter everywhere, though the windows and doors are fastened ever so carefully, and, at any moment you please, you reappear in your natural form." "Ah, madam!" exclaimed Leander, "I will be a spirit. I am about to travel; I can imagine an infinite number of pleasures to be enjoyed under such circumstances, and I prefer that gift to all the others which you have so generously offered me." "Be a spirit, then," replied Gentille, passing her hand three times over his eyes and face. "Be a beloved spirit, an amiable spirit, and a frolicsome spirit." She then embraced him, and gave him a little red hat ornamented with two parrot feathers. "When you put on this cap," continued she, "you will be invisible; when you take it off you appear again." Leander, enraptured, clapped the little red hat on his head, and wished to fly to the forest to cull some wild roses he had observed there. In an instant his body became light, and swift as thought he darted through the window towards the forest, soaring like a bird. He was rather alarmed when he saw himself at a great height and crossing the river. He feared he should fall into it, and that the power of the fairy could not prevent it: but he found himself safe at the foot of the rose-tree, gathered three roses, and returned immediately to the room in which the fairy was still standing. He presented them to her, charmed that his little trial-trip had been so successful. She told him to keep the roses; that one of them would furnish him with any money he might require; that by placing another in his mistress's bosom, he would know if she were faithful to him; and that the third would preserve him from sickness. Then, without waiting to be thanked, she wished him a fortunate journey and disappeared.

Leander was exceedingly delighted with the valuable boon which had been conferred upon him. "Could I ever have imagined," said he, "that for having saved a poor adder from the clutches of my gardener, I should be rewarded by the possession of such rare and great advantages! Oh, how I shall enjoy myself! What pleasant moments I shall pass! How many things I shall become acquainted with! I can be invisible, I can witness the most secret adventures." It occurred to him also, that it would be a rich treat to him to take some vengeance upon Furibon. He speedily arranged his affairs, and mounting the handsomest horse in his stables, named Grisdelin, he departed, followed by a few of his servants, wearing his livery, in order that the news of his return to court might be more speedily known.

You must know that Furibon, who was a great story-teller, had reported that but for his own bravery Leander would have assassinated him during the chase, that he had killed all his people, and that justice should be done upon him. The king, importuned by the queen, gave orders for the arrest of Leander, so that when he arrived in such a public manner, Furibon was immediately informed of it. He was, however, too great a coward to encounter Leander himself. He ran to his mother's apartments and told her Leander had returned to court, and intreated her to have him arrested. The queen, eager to do anything her monkey of a son desired, lost no time in seeking the king; and the prince, impatient to learn the result of the interview, stopped and put his ear against the door, and lifted up his hair to hear more distinctly. Leander entered the grand hall of the palace with his little red cap on his head, and was of course invisible. As soon as he caught sight of Furibon listening, he took a nail and a hammer and nailed his ear to the door-post. Furibon, distracted, raved and thumped at the door like a madman, uttering piercing shrieks. The queen, at the sound of his voice, ran to open the door to him, and in so doing pulled off her son's ear. He bled as if his throat had been cut, and made a hideous grimace. The queen, inconsolable, sat him in her lap, took up his ear, kissed it, and stuck it on again.

Leander took a handful of twigs which were used for whipping the king's little dogs, and rapped the queen's knuckles and the prince's nose with them. The queen called out she was being murdered, massacred. The king stared, the attendants rushed in, no one was to be seen, and it was whispered about that her majesty was out of her wits, and that it must be from grief at seeing Furibon's ear torn off. The king believed the rumour, and avoided the queen when she approached him. The scene was altogether very amusing. The merry Sprite gave Furibon another good switching, and then, quitting the apartment, he went into the garden and became visible. There he boldly gathered the cherries, apricots, and strawberries, and the rarest flowers in the queen's parterre—those she took special care of herself, and which it was death to touch. The gardener, thunderstruck, ran to tell their majesties that Prince Leander was stripping the fruit-trees and plundering the flower-garden. "What insolence!" exclaimed the queen. "My little Furibon, my dear poppet! forget, for a moment, the pain of your ear, and run after that wretch; take with you our guards, our musketeers, our police, our courtiers. Place yourself at their head, and cut the traitor into collops." Furibon, excited by his mother's words, and followed by a thousand men well armed, hurried into the garden, and saw Leander under a tree, who flung a stone at him, which broke his arm, and pelted his troops with oranges. They rushed upon Leander: but he instantly became invisible, and stepping behind Furibon, who was already in a sad plight, passed a cord between his legs, which threw him on his nose. They picked him up, and carried him to bed exceedingly ill.

Leander, satisfied with this revenge, returned to where his people awaited him,

distributed money amongst them, and sent them back to his castle, not wishing any one to accompany him who might be acquainted with the secret of the little red hat and the roses. He had not made up his mind whither he would go. He mounted his beautiful horse called Grisdelin, and allowed him to take whatever road he pleased. He passed through woods and plains, over hills and valleys, without number, resting occasionally, and eating and sleeping, without meeting with anything worthy of notice. At length he came to a forest, in which he stopped and dismounted, for the sake of a little shade, the day being very hot. The next moment he heard some one sighing and sobbing: he looked all about him, and saw a man, now running, now stopping, now uttering cries of despair, then silent, tearing his hair, and striking himself violent blows. There was no doubt he must be some miserable madman. The prince, touched with compassion, accosted him. "I see you," said he, "in so pitiable a condition that I cannot help inquiring the cause, and offering you any assistance in my power." "Oh, my lord," answered the young man, "there is no remedy for my misfortunes. This very day my beloved is to be sacrificed to a jealous old wretch, who is very wealthy, but who will make her the most miserable person in the world." "She loves you, then?" said Leander. "I may flatter myself she does," replied he. "And where is she?" continued the prince. "In a castle at the further end of this forest," answered the lover. "Well," said Leander, "wait here for me; I will shortly bring you some good news." So saying, he put on the little red hat, and wished himself in the castle. He had scarcely arrived, when he heard a strain of sweet music; and on entering the building, it echoed with the sound of violins and other instruments. He walked into a grand hall, filled with the relations and friends of the old man and the young lady. Nothing could be more lovely than the latter; but the paleness of her cheeks, the melancholy imprinted on her countenance, and the tears which occasionally filled her eyes, sufficiently expressed her grief. Leander, become an invisible spirit, placed himself in a corner, to watch the persons who were present. He saw the father and mother of this beautiful girl, who in whispers scolded her for the disinclination she manifested, and then returned to their places. The sprite glided behind the mother, and said in her ear, "As thou dost constrain thy child to give her hand to this old baboon, assure thyself that within a week thou shalt be punished by death." The woman, terrified at hearing a voice and seeing no one, and still more so by the threat it uttered, gave a loud shriek, and fell on the floor. Her husband asked what was the matter with her. She explained that she should be a dead woman if her daughter's marriage took place, and that she would not consent to the match for all the treasures in the world. The husband was inclined to laugh at her, and treat her as a dreamer; but the sprite approached him and said, "Incredulous old man, if thou dost not believe thy wife, it will cost thee thy life. Break off this match, and give thy daughter immediately to him she loves." These words produced an astonishing effect. The intended bridegroom was abruptly bowed out, on the excuse that they broke off the match solely in obedience to commands from heaven.

He doubted, and attempted some chicanery, for he was a Normandy man ;[1] but the sprite shouted such a terrible "Aha!" in his ear that it almost deafened him; and, to settle the matter, trod on his gouty feet hard enough to crush them. So they ran to seek out the lover in the wood. The sprite awaited his coming with great impatience—his young mistress alone could feel more. The lovers were ready to die with joy. The banquet which had been prepared for the old man's nuptials served for those of this happy pair; and the sprite, resuming his visible form, appeared suddenly at the hall-door, like a stranger who had been attracted by the sounds of festivity. As soon as the bridegroom perceived him, he ran and flung himself at his feet, calling him by every name his gratitude could suggest. Leander passed two days in their castle, and might have remained there if he had chosen, for they offered him all they were worth in the world. He left such good company with much regret.

He continued his journey, and reached a great city, in which there lived a queen who delighted in filling her court with the handsomest people in her kingdom. Leander, on his arrival, set up the most splendid equipage that was ever seen. He had only to shake his rose, and obtain as much money as he wished for. It is easy to imagine that, being handsome, young, witty, and above all, magnificent, the queen and princesses received him with a thousand marks of esteem and consideration.

This court was one of the most gallant in the universe. Not to be in love was to be ridiculous. Leander desired to be in the fashion, and fancied he could amuse himself by falling in love, and that when he departed he could leave his passion behind him as easily as his equipage. He cast his eyes on one of the queen's maids of honour, who was called the beautiful Blondine. She was a very accomplished person, but so cold and so grave that he was puzzled how to gain her favour.

He gave enchanting fêtes in her honour; balls and plays every evening; brought her the rarest presents from every part of the globe: but nothing seemed to move her, and the more indifferent she appeared to him, the more he exerted himself to please her. What fascinated him still more was, the belief that she had never loved any one. To be satisfied on this point, it occurred to him to try the power of his rose. He placed it, jestingly, on the bosom of Blondine, and immediately, fresh and blooming as it was, it became faded and withered. It needed nothing further to convince Leander that he had a favoured rival. He felt the mortification keenly, and to have ocular demonstration, he that evening wished himself in Blondine's apartment. He saw a musician introduced, who was one of the ugliest beings possible. He howled three or four verses which he had composed for her, the words and air of which were equally detestable; but she enjoyed them as if they were the finest things she had ever heard in her life. She praised

[1] Normandy is libelled sadly in France.

"Faisons tour de Norman;
Dédisons-nous."—LA FONTAINE, "Les Troqueurs."

"Le Normand même alors ignorait le parjure."—BOILEAU, Epist. ix.

all his frantic grimaces, so much was she taken with him; and finally permitted the filthy fellow to kiss her hand. The outraged sprite flung himself on the impertinent musician, and, pushing him violently against the balcony, threw him into the garden, knocking out the few teeth he had left in his head.

If a thunderbolt had fallen on Blondine she could not have been more astonished. She thought the musician himself possessed by a demon. The sprite glided out of the apartment without discovering himself, and returned immediately to his own lodgings, whence he wrote to Blondine, reproaching her as she deserved. Without waiting for her answer he departed, leaving his splendid carriage and horses to his equerries and gentlemen. He paid the rest of his people handsomely, and mounted his faithful Grisdelin, determined never to love again after the trick that had been played him.

Leander rode away at full speed. He was for a long time a prey to grief, but reason and absence gradually worked a cure. He arrived at another city, where he learned that a great ceremony was about to take place that very day, on the occasion of a young maiden being admitted into the order of vestals, although contrary to her own inclinations. The prince pitied her. It seemed as if his little red hat was given him expressly to repair public injuries and console the afflicted. He ran to the temple. The young creature was crowned with flowers, dressed in white, with her hair flowing on her shoulders; two of her brothers led her by the hand, and her mother followed her, with a large company of both sexes. The eldest vestal was in waiting at the gates of the temple. At this moment the sprite shouted, "Stop! stop! Wicked brothers! Reckless parent! Stop! Heaven is opposed to this unjust ceremony. If you venture to proceed you shall be crushed like frogs."

They stared about them without being able to discover whence proceeded these terrible threats. The brothers said it was the lover of their sister, who had hidden himself in some hole to play the oracle; but the sprite in great wrath took a long stick and inflicted a hundred blows on them. The stick was seen to rise and fall on their shoulders like a hammer upon an anvil. Nobody could doubt that the blows were real. Terror seized the vestals, they fled, and everybody followed their example. The sprite alone remained with the young victim. He quickly took off his little hat, and begged to know how he could assist her. She told him, with more courage than one would have expected in a girl of her age, that there was a knight to whom she was not indifferent, but that he had no fortune. Leander shook his rose so much that he left with them ten millions; they married and lived very happily.

The last adventure he met with was the most agreeable. On entering a great forest he heard the plaintive cries of a young female. He felt assured some violence was being offered her. He looked about him everywhere, and at length perceived four men well armed carrying off a girl, who appeared to be about thirteen or fourteen years of age. He hastened towards them and exclaimed, "What has this child done to you, that you should treat her like a slave?" "Ha! ha! my little lord," answered the chief of the

party, "what business is that of yours?" "I command you," added Leander, "to release her instantly!" "Yes, yes; without fail," they all answered laughingly. The prince, much irritated, threw himself from his horse, and clapped on his little red hat, for he did not think himself bound to face fairly four men, who were sufficiently powerful to fight twelve. When his little hat was on, they must have been cunning who could have seen him. The robbers cried, "He has fled; it is not worth our while to hunt for him; let us only catch his horse." One remained as a guard with the young girl, while the other three ran after Grisdelin, who gave them plenty of exercise. The little girl continued her cries and complaints: "Alas, my beautiful princess," said she, "how happy was I in your palace! How could I live far away from you! If you knew of my sad misfortune, you would send your amazons to rescue your poor Abricotine!" Leander heard her, and without delay seized the arm of the robber who held her, and tied him to a tree, before he had time or power to help himself; for he could not see the person who bound him.

Hearing his cries for help, one of his comrades came running quite out of breath, and asked who had bound him. "I don't know," he replied, "I have seen no one." "That's a story trumped up to excuse thyself," answered the other, "but I've long known thee to be but a coward, and I will treat thee as thou deservest." So saying he gave him a score of blows with his stirrup-leathers. The sprite amused himself amazingly with hearing him bellow; and then, approaching the second robber, he seized his arms, and bound him to a tree facing his comrade, saying to him, as soon as he had done it, "Now, then, my brave fellow, who has pinioned thee? Art thou not a great coward to have suffered it?" The rogue had not a word to say for himself, and hung down his head ashamed; not being able to imagine how he had been made a prisoner without seeing any one. In the meanwhile Abricotine took the opportunity of escaping, although she knew not which way to run. Leander, missing her, called three times for Grisdelin, who being in a hurry to obey his master, got rid of the two robbers that pursued him with a couple of kicks, fracturing the skull of one, and breaking three ribs of the other. The sprite was now only anxious to rejoin Abricotine; for she had appeared to him very pretty. He wished to be where she was, and instantly found himself in the presence of the girl; who was so very much fatigued that she was clinging to the trees every moment for support. When she saw Grisdelin advancing so gaily, she exclaimed, "Good, good; here is a fine horse that will carry Abricotine back to the Palace of Pleasures!" The sprite heard her plainly enough; but she could not see him. He rode close up to her, Grisdelin stopped, and she jumped up. The sprite caught her in his arms, and placed her gently before him. Oh, what a fright Abricotine was in, to feel herself in the grasp of somebody, and see nobody! She did not dare to move; she shut her eyes, fearing to see some fearful goblin. She uttered not the slightest word. The prince, who had always the nicest sweetmeats in the world in his pockets, tried to put some in her mouth; but she set her teeth, and kept her lips as close as possible.

At length he took off his little red hat, and said to her, "Why, Abricotine, you are very timid, to be so much afraid of me. It is I who released you from the hands of the robbers." She opened her eyes and recognised him. "Ah! my lord," said she, "I am greatly indebted to you. It is true, I was much alarmed to find myself in the power of an invisible being." "I am not an invisible being," replied he, "but, perhaps, your sight was troubled at the moment, and you did not observe me." Abricotine believed that it must have been so, though she was naturally shrewd enough. After having chatted for some time on indifferent subjects, Leander begged she would tell him her age, her country, and by what mischance she had fallen into the hands of robbers. "I am under too much obligation to you," said she, "to refuse satisfying your curiosity; but I intreat you, my lord, to consider the speed of our journey of more importance than listening to my story.

"A fairy, who in science never had an equal, fell so desperately in love with a certain prince, that, although she was the first fairy who had ever been weak enough to love, she did not hesitate to marry him, in spite of all the other fairies, who unceasingly represented to her the wrong she did to their order. They would not allow her to dwell amongst them any longer; and all she could do was to build a grand palace near the confines of their kingdom. But the prince she had married became weary of her. He was exasperated at her foreknowledge of all his actions. The instant he had the least liking for another, she flew out at him like a fury, and changed the object of his admiration from the most beautiful person to the ugliest fright in the world.

"The prince, finding such an excess of affection extremely inconvenient, went off one fine morning with post horses, and travelled a very, very great distance, in order to hide himself in a deep cave at the bottom of a mountain, where she should not be able to find him. He was not successful. She followed him, and informed him that she should shortly become a mother; conjured him to return to his palace; promised that she would give him money, horses, dogs, arms, build a riding-school, and a tennis-court, and lay out a mall for his diversion. All this had no effect on him; he was naturally obstinate and a libertine. He said a hundred harsh things to her, and called her an old witch, and a hobgoblin. 'It is fortunate for thee,' said she, 'that I have more sense than thou hast folly; for I could transform thee, were I so inclined, into a cat that should be continually squalling in a gutter, or into a vile toad sputtering in the mud, or into a pumpkin, or a screech owl; but the greatest punishment I can inflict on thee is to abandon thee to thy own humours. Remain in thy hole, in thy gloomy cavern with the bears; call around thee the neighbouring shepherdesses: thou wilt learn in time the difference between beggarly peasants and a fairy, who can render herself as charming as she pleases.'

"She immediately entered her flying chariot, and departed swifter than a bird. The moment she reached home, she transported her palace to an island; turning out of it

all the guards and officers, and taking into her service women of the amazonian race, whom she set to watch the shores of the island so strictly that no man could possibly enter it. She named this spot the Isle of Peaceful Pleasures, asserting constantly that it was impossible to enjoy such in the society of the male sex. She brought up her daughter in this opinion. There never was so beautiful a creature. She is the princess whom I serve; and as all the purest pleasures reign around her, nobody grows old in her palace. Young as I look, I am more than two hundred. When my mistress grew up, her fairy mother gave her the island, with many excellent lessons how to live happily. She then returned to Fairy Land, and the Princess of Peaceful Pleasures governs her state in an admirable manner.

"I do not remember having seen, ever since I was born, any other men than the robbers who carried me off, and you, my lord. Those ruffians told me they were employed by a certain ugly and misshapen person, called Furibon, who was in love with my mistress from seeing only her portrait. They prowled about the island, without daring to set foot on it. Our amazons are too vigilant to let any one enter it; but as I have charge of the princess's birds, and accidentally let her beautiful parrot fly away, fearing her displeasure, I imprudently quitted the island in search of it. The men seized me, and would have carried me away with them but for your assistance."

"If you have any gratitude," said Leander, "may I not hope, beautiful Abricotine, that you will enable me to enter the Island of Peaceful Pleasures, and gaze on this wonderful princess, who never grows old?" "Ah, my lord," said she, "we should be lost, both of us, if we attempted such a thing! It is easy for you to forego the enjoyment of a pleasure you never knew. You have never been in that palace; fancy there is none." "It is not so easy as you imagine," replied the prince, "to root from one's memory things that have so agreeably occupied it; and I do not agree with you that it is certain that to enjoy peaceful pleasures you must absolutely banish our sex." "My lord," answered she, "it is not for me to decide that point. I will even confess to you, that, if all men resembled yourself, I should be of opinion that the princess would alter the laws; but as I have only seen five, and found four of them so wicked, I conclude that the bad far outnumber the good, and that it is, therefore, better to banish them all."

Thus conversing, they came to the bank of a large river. Abricotine sprang lightly to the ground. "Adieu, my lord," said she to the prince, making him a profound courtesy; "I wish you so much happiness that the whole world shall be to you but one Island of Pleasures. Retire quickly, for fear our amazons should observe you." "And I, beautiful Abricotine," said the prince, "wish you a tender heart, in order that I may now and then be recalled to your memory."

So saying he rode away, and entered the thickest part of a wood he saw near the river. He took off Grisdelin's saddle and bridle, that he might graze at his pleasure. He put on his little red hat, and wished himself in the Island of Peaceful Pleasures.

His wish was instantly gratified: he found himself in the most beautiful and the most extraordinary place in the world.

The palace was of pure gold; around the parapets stood statues of crystal, studded with jewels, which represented the signs of the zodiac, and all the wonders of nature, the sciences, the arts, the elements, the sea with its fishes, the earth with its beasts, Diana hunting with her nymphs, amazons performing their noble exercises, the amusements and occupations of a country life, shepherdesses with their flocks and their dogs, agriculture, harvest, gardens, flowers, bees; and amongst all these various subjects there was not a male figure to be seen, no men, no boys—not even a poor little cupid. The fairy's wrath against her truant husband had rendered her merciless to his whole sex.

"Abricotine has not deceived me," said the prince to himself. "The very idea of man is banished from this spot. Let us see if he be much a loser by it." He entered the palace, and beheld at every step such marvels, that having once cast his eyes on them, he could not withdraw them without a struggle. The intrinsic value of the gold and diamonds was trifling compared to that of the art which had been employed upon them. In every direction he met with groups of gentle, innocent, laughing girls, beautiful as day. He passed through a long suite of vast apartments, some filled with the finest china, the perfume of which, joined to its fanciful forms and colours, was exceedingly pleasing; others, the walls of which were made of porcelain, so transparent that the daylight streamed through them; others were of rock crystal, richly engraved; and there were also some of amber and of coral, of lapis lazuli, of agate, of cornelian; and the princess's own apartment was entirely of looking-glass, for it was impossible to multiply too much so charming an object.

Her throne was formed out of a single pearl, hollowed in the shape of a shell, and in which she could sit with perfect ease. It was hung round with lustres, ornamented with rubies and diamonds; but all this looked less than nothing beside the incomparable beauty of the princess. Her infantile air combined all the simple grace of the child with the dignified manners of the educated woman. Nothing could equal the softness or the brilliancy of her eyes. It was impossible to find a fault in her. She smiled graciously on her maids of honour, who on that occasion had arrayed themselves as nymphs for her entertainment. As she missed Abricotine, she inquired where she was. The nymphs replied that they had sought in vain for her; she could not be found. Leander, dying to speak, assumed the tiny voice of a parrot (for there were several in the room), and said, "Charming princess, Abricotine will soon return; she would have been carried off, but for a young prince she met with." The princess was surprised at this speech of the parrot's, for the answer was so much to the purpose. "You are a very pretty little parrot," said she, "but you are evidently mistaken; and when Abricotine comes she will whip you." "I shall not be whipped," replied Leander, still imitating the voice of the parrot. "She will tell you about the anxiety of the stranger

to be permitted to enter this palace, and disabuse your mind of the false notions you entertain respecting his sex." "Really, parrot," exclaimed the princess, "it is a pity you are not always so entertaining; I should love you dearly." "Ah! if to please you it be only necessary for me to talk," replied Leander, "I will never cease speaking." "Why!" continued the princess, "would one not swear this parrot was a sorcerer!" "He is more a lover than a sorcerer," answered Leander. At that moment Abricotine entered, and flung herself at the feet of her beautiful mistress. She related her adventure, and drew the prince's portrait in very vivid and favourable colours.

"I should have hated all men," she added, "if I had not seen that one. Oh, madam! he is so charming! His air, and all his manners have in them something so noble, so intelligent, and as everything he says is excessively agreeable, I think I have done very right in not bringing him hither." The princess said not a word about that; but continued to question Abricotine respecting the prince; whether she did not know his name, his family, whence he came, whither he was going; and finally she fell into a profound reverie.

Leander narrowly observed everything, and continued to speak as he had begun. "Abricotine is ungrateful, madam," said he. "This poor stranger will die of grief if he do not see you." "Well, parrot, let him die then," replied the princess sighing, "and as thou presumest to talk on this matter like a rational person, and not like a little bird, I forbid thee ever to speak to me again about this stranger." Leander was charmed to see that the words of Abricotine and of the parrot had made such an impression on the princess. He gazed on her with a delight which made him forget the oath he had taken never to love again so long as he lived. Certainly, there could be no comparison between the princess and that coquette, Blondine. "Is it possible," said he to himself, "that this masterpiece of nature, this wonder of our time, should dwell for ever in an island where nobody dares approach her! But," continued he, "what does it signify to me that all other men are banished, since I have the honour to be present; to see, to hear, to admire her, and love her, as I already do to distraction?"

It was late; the princess passed into a saloon of marble and porphyry, where several sparkling fountains in full play shed around them a delicious coolness. As soon as she entered an overture commenced, and a sumptuous supper was served. On each side of the saloon were aviaries, full of rare birds, of which Abricotine had the care.

Leander had acquired during his travels the art of imitating their various notes; he imitated even such as were not there. The princess listened, looked, was astonished, and at length rose from the table and approached one of the cages. Leander warbled half as loudly again, and assuming the voice of a canary-bird, he sang the following words to an air which he improvised on the spot:—

"Life without love is but a winter's day;
Joyless along its lonely path we stray.
Love, then—Oh love a lover who adores thee!
All here invites—e'en love himself implores thee!"

The princess, still more surprised, sent for Abricotine, and asked her if she had taught one of the canary birds to sing. She replied no, but that she thought canaries might fairly be supposed to possess as much intelligence as parrots. The princess smiled, and believed that Abricotine had given the birds lessons in private, and returned to the table to finish her supper.

Leander had worked sufficiently hard to have acquired a good appetite. He drew near to the banquet, the odour of which alone was invigorating. The princess had a blue cat, a very fashionable appendage at that period, and which she was exceedingly fond of: one of her maids of honour carried it in her arms. "Madam," said the maid of honour, "it is my duty to inform your highness that Bluet is hungry." They seated the cat at the table with a little gold plate before it, and a napkin of lace, very tastefully folded. The cat had a collar of pearls, to which was appended a golden bell; and with the air of a gourmand it began to eat. "Oh, oh!" quoth Leander to himself, "a great blue tom-cat, who probably has never caught a mouse in his life, and who is assuredly not of a better family than I am, has the honour to sup with my beautiful princess! I should like to know if he loves her as well as I do; and if it is fair that I should only enjoy the smell while he munches the tit-bits!" With that he quietly lifted up the blue cat, placed himself in the arm-chair, and took the animal in his lap. Nobody observed him, of course; how could they? He had on his little red hat. The princess piled up the golden plate of Bluet with partridge, quail, and pheasant. Partridge, quail, and pheasant disappeared in a moment. All the court agreed never had a blue cat been known to have such an enormous appetite. There were some excellent ragouts on the table. Leander took a fork, and holding forth with it the cat's paw, he helped himself to the ragouts. Sometimes he took rather a large quantity. Bluet did not understand joking; he mewed and tried to scratch like a wild cat. The princess desired the servants to hand this tart or that fricassee to poor Bluet. "Observe how he cries for it!" Leander laughed in his sleeve at this absurd adventure; but he was very thirsty, not having been accustomed to sit so long at table without drinking. He caught hold, with the cat's paw, of a great melon, which a little allayed his thirst, and supper being nearly over, he made off to the sideboard, and drank two bottles of delicious nectar.

The princess entered her closet; she desired Abricotine to follow her, and to shut the door. Leander kept close to her, and made a third in the apartment, unperceived. The princess said to her confidante, "Acknowledge that thou hast exaggerated in describing to me this unknown; it appears to me impossible that he can be so charming." "I protest, madam," replied she, "that if I have erred in anything it is in not having praised him enough." The princess sighed, and was silent for a minute; then, resuming the conversation, "I am obliged to you," said she, "for having refused to bring him with you." "But, madam," replied Abricotine (who was a shrewd girl, and saw already the turn her mistress's thoughts were taking), supposing he had come hither

to admire the wonders of this beautiful place, what harm could it have caused to you? Do you desire to remain for ever unknown in this corner of the world, hidden from all other mortals? Of what value is so much grandeur, pomp, and magnificence, if nobody see it?" "Peace! peace! little casuist," cried the princess; "trouble not the happy repose I have enjoyed these six hundred years. Dost thou imagine, if I had led a restless and turbulent life I could have existed so many years? None but innocent and tranquil pleasures can produce such effects. Have we not read in the best histories the revolutions of great empires, the unforeseen blows of inconstant fortunes, the wild excesses of love, the pangs of absence or of jealousy? What is it that occasions all these terrors and afflictions? Nothing but the intercourse between the sexes. Thanks to the precaution of my mother, I am exempt from all these crosses, I feel no heart-aches, I cherish no vain desires, I know neither envy, love, nor hatred. Ah! for ever, for ever, let us enjoy the happy indifference!" Abricotine did not venture to reply: the princess waited a short time, and then asked her if she had nothing to say. She answered that in that case she thought it had been very unnecessary to send miniatures of the princess to the courts of several foreign sovereigns, where they would only make people miserable, as everybody would be dying to see her, and not being able to do so, would go distracted." "Notwithstanding that," said the princess, "I confess I wish that my portrait should fall into the hands of this stranger, whose name I am ignorant of." "Oh, madam," replied Abricotine, "is not his desire to behold you already sufficiently violent? Would you increase it?" "Yes!" exclaimed the princess; "a certain feeling of vanity, unknown to me till now, has given birth to that wish." Leander listened to all this without losing a word. Several expressions gave him the most flattering hopes, while the next moment others seemed to destroy them entirely.

It was late; the princess entered her bed-chamber to retire for the night. Leander would have been too happy to follow her to her toilet, but, although it was easy for him to do so, the respect he entertained for her was sufficient to prevent him. He felt he ought not to take any liberties beyond what he might fairly be allowed, and his love was of so delicate and refined a nature that he tormented himself most ingeniously respecting the veriest trifles.

He entered a cabinet, close to the bed-chamber of the princess, to enjoy at least the pleasure of hearing her voice. She was at that moment asking Abricotine if she had seen anything extraordinary in her little journey. "Madam," she replied, "I passed through a forest, in which I saw some animals resembling children; they jumped and danced upon the boughs of the trees like squirrels; they are very ugly, but their dexterity is incomparable." "Ah, how I should like to have some!" said the princess; "if they were less agile one might possibly catch some of them."

Leander, who had also passed through this forest, knew perfectly well Abricotine must mean monkeys. Immediately he wished himself there: he caught a dozen large and

small and of various colours, put them with considerable difficulty into a great sack, then wished himself at Paris, where he had heard say anything could be had for money. He went to Dautel, who is a virtuoso, and bought of him a little coach entirely made of gold, to which he attached six green monkeys, with flame-coloured morocco harness mounted with gold. He then went to Brioché,[1] a celebrated puppet-showman. He found there two very clever monkeys. The most intelligent was called Briscambille, and the other Perceforêt; they were both exceedingly polite and well educated. He dressed Briscambille in royal robes, and put him into the coach. Perceforêt he made the coachman, the other monkeys were attending as pages.

Nothing more elegant was ever seen. He put the coach and the booted monkeys into the same sack, and the princess was not in bed before she heard in the gallery the sound of little coach-wheels, and her nymphs came to announce to her the arrival of the king of the dwarfs. At the same moment the little carriage was driven into the room with its monkey-train, and the wild ones played innumerable tricks, which, in their way, were quite equal to those of Briscambille and Perceforêt. Sooth to say, Leander conducted the whole affair. He took the little monkey out of the little gold coach, who had in his hand a box encrusted with diamonds, which he presented with considerable grace to the princess. She opened it instantly, and found in it a note, in which were written the following lines :—

"What beauties, what treasures surround me!
Fair palace, how lovely art thou!
Yet lovelier she who has bound me,
By charms never dreamed of till now!
Peace reigns in this thrice happy Isle,
But none the poor captive can feel,
Who worships, yet trembles the while
His flame or his form to reveal."

It is easy to imagine her surprise! Briscambille made a sign to Perceforêt to come and dance with him. None of the most celebrated dancing monkeys ever equalled this wonderful pair: but the princess, uneasy at not being able to guess from whom the verses came, dismissed the performers sooner than she would otherwise have done, notwithstanding that they had amused her vastly, and that she had at first laughed at them to such a degree that she nearly fainted. She then gave herself up entirely to her reflections, but without being able to penetrate the mystery.

Leander, satisfied with the attention paid to his verses, and the pleasure the princess had taken in seeing the monkeys, now thought it was time to take a little rest, of which he was in great need; but he was afraid he might select an apartment belonging to one of the nymphs-in-waiting on the princess. He remained for some time in the grand gallery of the palace; then, descending, he found an open door. He entered softly one of the lower rooms, more beautiful and commodious than any he had ever seen. There

[1] See note to p. 53.

was a bed in it with gold and green gauze furniture, looped up in festoons with ropes of pearls, and tassels of rubies and emeralds. It was already light enough for him to examine and admire the extraordinary magnificence of this piece of furniture. Having fastened the door, he fell asleep; but the thoughts of his beautiful princess disturbed his slumbers, and he awoke frequently sighing forth her name.

He rose so early that he had time to grow impatient before the time arrived that she was visible, and looking about him, he perceived a canvas prepared for painting, and a packet of colours. He immediately remembered what the princess had said to Abricotine about her portrait; and, without losing an instant, he sat down before a large looking-glass (for he painted better than the best artists of his time), and took his own portrait: he then drew in an oval that of the princess, for her features were so vividly impressed on his heart, that he had no occasion to see her for the first sketch. He finished the portrait afterwards from the fair original without her perceiving him, and as the desire to please her gave a charm to his labour, never was there a picture so admirably painted. He had drawn himself kneeling and holding the portrait of the princess in one hand, and in the other a scroll, on which was written:—

"Her image is more perfect in my heart."

When she entered her cabinet she was astonished to see the picture of a man. She riveted her eyes upon it in still greater surprise when she recognised her own, and read the inscription on the scroll, which afforded her ample food for curiosity and conjecture. She was alone at that moment, and could not tell what to think of so extraordinary a circumstance, but persuaded herself that it must be Abricotine who had paid her this delicate attention. She now only wanted to ascertain whether the picture of this cavalier was merely a fancy one, or if Abricotine had really seen such a person. She rose hastily, and ran to call her. Leander was already in the cabinet with his little red hat on, anxious to hear what would be said on the subject.

The princess desired Abricotine to look at the picture, and to give her her opinion of it. The moment she cast her eyes upon it she exclaimed, "I protest, madam, it is the likeness of that generous stranger to whom I owe my life! Yes, 'tis he, I cannot be mistaken. There are his features, his form, his hair, his carriage!" "Thou feignest astonishment," said the princess smiling; "but it was placed here by thyself." "By me, madam!" replied Abricotine. "I swear to you I never saw this picture before in my life. Am I capable of concealing anything from you which it would interest you to be acquainted with? And by what miracle could it come into my possession? I have not the least knowledge of painting—no man has ever entered this island, and yet here are your united portraits." "I tremble with fear," said the princess; "some demon must have brought this painting hither!" "Madam," said Abricotine, "may it not have been love? If you think I am right, I will venture to give you a little advice. Let us burn the picture immediately." "It would be such

a pity," said the princess sighing; "methinks my cabinet could not be better adorned than by this painting." She looked at Abricotine as she uttered these words; but the girl continued to insist they ought to burn an article that could only have been brought there by magic. "And these words," said the princess, "'her image is more perfect in my heart,' must we burn them also?" "We ought to spare nothing," replied Abricotine, "not even your own likeness." And so saying she ran off to fetch a light. The princess turned away to a window, unable to gaze any longer on a portrait which produced such an impression on her heart; and Leander, who did not choose his picture should be burnt, took this opportunity of removing it unobserved by the princess. He had scarcely quitted the room with it, when she turned to take another look at the charming form which had so fascinated her. What was her surprise at its disappearance! She hunted all round the room for it. Abricotine returned, and was asked if she had removed it. She assured her she had not, and this last adventure completely terrified them.

As soon as Leander had hidden the portrait he returned to the cabinet. It was an exceeding pleasure to him so frequently to hear and see his lovely princess. He dined every day at her table with the blue cat, who was certainly not the gainer by it; there was, however, much still wanting to Leander's happiness, as he dared neither speak in his own voice, nor make himself visible. It is rarely that we love those we have never seen.

The princess had a taste for everything that was beautiful. In the present state of her heart she needed amusement. One morning when she was surrounded by her nymphs, she observed that she had a great desire to know how the ladies dressed in the various courts throughout the world, in order that she might select the most becoming and tasteful fashion for her own. Leander wanted no other inducement to range the universe. He pushed his little red hat almost over his eyes, and wished himself in China. He bought the richest stuff he could find there, and took copies of all the dresses. From thence he flew to Siam, where he did the same thing. In brief, he visited the four quarters of the world in three days; and as fast as he could load himself he returned to the Palace of Peaceful Pleasures, to hide what he had purchased in one of the apartments. When he had thus collected an infinite number of curiosities (for money was nothing to him; his rose furnished him with it incessantly) he went and bought five or six dozen dolls, which he had dressed in Paris; the place of all the world in which fashion has most temples. The dolls exhibited every variety of national habit, and all of unparalleled magnificence. Leander arranged them in the cabinet of the princess.

When she entered nobody was ever more agreeably surprised. Each doll held a present in its hand; either watches, bracelets, diamond buttons, or necklaces: the most prominent bore a miniature case. The princess opened it, and found the portrait of Leander. Her recollection of the other painting enabled her to recognise it

instantly. She uttered a loud exclamation; then looking at Abricotine, said to her, "I am at a loss to understand what has happened in my palace for some time past. My birds talk rationally. I seem to have only to form a wish to have it instantly accomplished. I have been twice presented with the portrait of the person who saved thee from the robbers; and here is a collection of rich stuffs, diamonds, embroideries, lace, and innumerable other rare and costly things. Who is the fairy, or who is the demon, that takes the trouble to render me all these agreeable services?" Leander hearing her say this, wrote the following lines on his tablets, and threw them at the feet of the princess:—

"I am neither fiend nor fay,
Only an unhappy lover,
Who dare not himself discover
Pity me at least you may!—PRINCE SPRITE."

The tablets were so brilliantly ornamented with gold and jewels that they caught her attention instantly; she opened them, and read with the greatest astonishment what the prince had written on them. "This invisible being must be a monster," she exclaimed, "since he dares not show himself; but if it were true that he had some affection for me, the presenting me with so touching a portrait shows he cannot have much delicacy. He must either not love me, to subject my heart to so painful a trial, or he has too good an opinion of himself, and believes that he is far more fascinating." "I have heard say, madam," replied Abricotine, "that sprites are composed of air and fire; that they have no corporeal substance, and that it is only by their intelligence and their desires that their existence is manifested." "I am right glad to hear it," rejoined the princess; "such a lover cannot greatly disturb my tranquillity."

Leander was delighted to hear her, and see her so occupied with his portrait. He remembered, that in a grotto to which she frequently repaired, there was a pedestal intended to support a statue of Diana, which was still in the hands of the sculptor. He placed himself on it in an extraordinary habit, crowned with laurels, and holding a lyre in his hand, on which he could play better than Apollo. He waited impatiently for the coming of his princess, according to her daily custom. It was the spot to which she retired to meditate upon her unknown adorer. Abricotine's account of him, joined to the pleasure which the contemplation of his portrait had occasioned her, combined to rob her heart of rest. She found a charm in solitude, and her joyous disposition had undergone such a change that her nymphs could scarcely recognise their mistress.

As she entered the grotto she made signs to her attendants not to follow her. Her nymphs dispersed themselves in the various avenues. The princess threw herself on a bank of turf. She sighed and shed a few tears. She even uttered some words, but in so low a tone that Leander could not catch them. He had worn his little red hat in order that she should not see him on her entrance, but he now took it off. Her surprise was excessive at beholding him. She took him to be a statue, for he stood motionless in the attitude he had assumed. She gazed upon him with a mixed

feeling of joy and alarm. His unexpected appearance astonished her, but in her heart pleasure soon conquered fear, and she began to admire a figure so lifelike; when the prince, to the accompaniment of his lyre, sang the following verse:—

"What perils lurk in this enchanted spot!
Indifference the heart availeth not!
Vain are the vows I made to love no more;
Hopeless, I give the unequal struggle o'er.
Why call this realm the Isle of Peaceful Pleasure?
Who treads its shore, a slave thenceforth must sigh.
Vanquish'd, I cease with Love my strength to measure;
Here, in his chains, I would but live and die!"

Melodious as was the voice of Leander, the princess could not master the terror with which the prodigy inspired her. She turned pale and fainted. Leander, alarmed, leaped from the pedestal, and put on his little red hat, that no one might perceive him. He raised the princess in his arms, and used every means his affection and anxiety could suggest to recover her. She opened her beautiful eyes, and looked around her as if in search of him. She saw no one; but she felt somebody was near her who pressed her hands, kissed them, and bathed them with tears. For some time she did not dare speak. Her mind was agitated between hope and fear. She trembled at the sprite; but she loved the handsome unknown, whose features she believed it had assumed in the statue. At length she exclaimed, "Sprite! charming sprite! why are you not the person I would have you be?" At these words Leander was on the point of declaring himself, but still hesitated to do so. "If I terrify the object I adore," thought he, "if she fear me, she will not love me." These considerations kept him silent, and induced him to retreat into a corner of the grotto.

The princess, believing herself to be alone, called Abricotine and related to her the prodigy of the animated statue—that its voice was celestial, and that when she fainted the sprite had rendered her the kindest assistance. "What a pity," she exclaimed, "that this sprite is deformed and hideous, for nothing can be more tender and amiable than its manners." "And who told you, madam," replied Abricotine, "that it is so? Did not Psyche believe that Cupid was a serpent? Your adventure resembles hers. You are not less beautiful. If it were Cupid who loved you, would you not return his passion?" "If Cupid and the unknown were the same person," said the princess, blushing, "I should love Cupid; but such a happiness is not in store for me. I am fascinated by a chimera, and the fatal portrait of that stranger, joined to thy description of him, has caused a revolution in my feelings so opposed to the precepts of my mother that I dread the punishment it may entail on me." "Pray, madam," said Abricotine, interrupting her, "have you not already trouble enough without anticipating evils which will never occur?" It is easy to imagine the delight this conversation gave Leander.

In the meanwhile little Furibon, still in love with the princess without having seen her, impatiently awaited the return of the four emissaries he had despatched to the Island

of Peaceful Pleasures. One alone found his way back, and gave him an account of all that had happened. He informed him also that the island was defended by amazons, and that, unless he was at the head of a large army, he had no chance of setting foot in it.

The king, his father, was just dead, and Furibon was therefore his own master, with absolute power over everything. He raised an army of upwards of four hundred thousand men, and marched at the head of them. There was a fine general! Briscambille or Perceforêt would, either of them, have made a much better. His charger was not half a yard high. When the amazons perceived this great army advancing they gave notice to the princess, who lost not a moment in sending the faithful Abricotine to the kingdom of the fairies to request her mother's advice as to the best means of resisting Furibon's invasion. But Abricotine found the fairy exceedingly angry. "I am aware of everything my daughter has done," said she. "Prince Leander is in her palace; he loves her, and is beloved again. All my care has been insufficient to defend her from the tyranny of Cupid; she is in his fatal power. Alas! the cruel god is not satisfied with the mischief he has done me; he exerts his influence over the being I loved dearer than my life! Such are the decrees of destiny! I cannot oppose them. Begone, Abricotine! I will hear no more of this girl, whose sentiments cause me so much affliction." Abricotine returned to the princess with these bad tidings. It required little more to drive her to distraction. Leander was beside her, invisible; her extreme distress caused him the greatest pain. He dared not speak to her at that moment; but he recollected that Furibon was very avaricious, and that probably he might be tempted by a large sum of money to abandon his enterprise. He assumed the dress of an amazon, and wished himself in the forest where he had left his horse. As soon as he called "Grisdelin!" Grisdelin came leaping and prancing to him with great delight, for he had become very weary waiting so long for his dear master; but when he saw him in female attire he could not recognise him, and feared at first he was deceived. On Leander's arrival at the camp of Furibon everybody took him to be really an amazon, he was so handsome. They informed the king that a young lady demanded an audience on the part of the princess of the Island of Peaceful Pleasures. He hurried on his royal robes, and seated himself on his throne, where one would have thought he was a large toad pretending to be a king.

Leander commenced his address by informing him that "The princess preferring a quiet and peaceable life to the troubles of warfare, was willing to give him any sum of money he would name, provided he would not molest her; but that, at the same time, if he refused this offer, she should certainly defend herself to the extent of her power."

Furibon replied that "he was willing to take pity on her; that he would honour her by his protection; and that she had only to send him a hundred thousand thousand thousand millions of pistoles, and he would immediately return to his own kingdom."

Leander answered, "that it would take too much time to count a hundred thousand thousand thousand millions of pistoles; but that he had only to say how many rooms full he desired; and that the princess was too rich and too liberal to calculate so closely." Furibon was greatly astonished, that instead of endeavouring to bargain for a smaller sum, he was actually offered more; he thought to himself he would take all the money he could get, and then arrest the amazon and kill her, in order that she should never return to her mistress.

He accordingly told Leander he required thirty very large rooms to be filled completely with gold pieces, and gave him his royal word that he would then retire with his army. Leander was conducted to the apartments selected to be filled with gold. He took the rose and shook it, and shook it, so much, so much, that out of it poured pistoles, quadruples,[1] louis, gold crowns, rose-nobles,[2] sovereigns,[3] guineas,[4] sequins,[5] in a perfect deluge. There are few things in the world to be seen more beautiful than a shower of gold.

Furibon was in raptures, in ecstasies; and the more gold he saw, the more he longed to seize the amazon, and catch the princess. As soon as the thirty chambers were quite full, he called to his guards, "Arrest! arrest that cheat; she has brought me bad money." All the guards rushed forwards to fling themselves upon the amazon; but, at the same instant, the little red hat was put on, and Leander had disappeared. They thought he had made his escape, and ran after him, leaving Furibon by himself. Leander immediately seized him by the hair and cut off his head, as if it had been a chicken's, without the wretched little king ever seeing the hand that dealt the blow.

As soon as Leander had severed the head, he wished himself in the Palace of Peaceful Pleasures. The princess was walking in the gardens, meditating sadly on the message she had received from her mother, and on the means by which she could repulse Furibon; a difficult matter, considering she had no other troops but a few amazons, who could not possibly defend her against four hundred thousand men.

Suddenly she saw a head suspended in the air, without appearing to have anything to sustain it; a prodigy which astonished her so much, that she knew not what to think

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[1] The Spanish gold doubloon, called quadruple in French, because it was equal in value to four Louis, or eighty francs.

[2] The rose-noble, an appropriate coin to issue from such a mint, was the old English gold coin of Edward III.'s reign, first called rose-noble in that of Henry VIII., to distinguish it from the new George noble, struck by the latter monarch.

[3] The sovereigns here mentioned were Austrian gold coins of the value of thirty-three francs nine centimes, or about twenty-eight shillings English. There was, however, a gold sovereign coined in England in the reign of Henry VII. The modern Austrian sovereign is of much less value.

[4] The guinea in Madame d'Aulnoy's days was a new coin. It was first struck in the year 1664, and took its name from the gold of which it was made, being brought from Guinea by the African Company. It was originally only a twenty-shilling piece; its increased value occurring from the subsequent scarcity of gold, in the reign of William and Mary, at one period of which it passed for thirty shillings.

[5] The sequin (zecchino) is a gold coin still current in Italy and the Levant, and varies greatly in value. In Tuscany it is worth about 10*s.* 6*d.* English.

of it. It was still more astounding when she saw the head laid at her feet by an unseen hand. At the same time she heard a voice which said to her:—

"Fear no more, charming princess, Furibon will never harm you."

Abricotine recognised the voice of Leander, and exclaimed, "I protest, madam, the invisible being who speaks to you is the stranger who rescued me!" The princess appeared equally surprised and delighted. "Ah!" said she, "if it be true that the sprite and the stranger are one and the same, I confess it would give me great pleasure to prove to him my gratitude." The sprite replied, "I will labour still more to deserve it." With that he returned instantly to the army of Furibon, through which the news of their king's death was spreading rapidly. The moment he appeared among them in his usual dress, every one ran to him, officers and soldiers surrounded him, uttering loud shouts of joy. They acknowledged him as their king—that the crown belonged of right to him. He liberally allowed them to share amongst themselves the thirty chambers full of gold, so that the whole army were made rich for ever; and after several ceremonies, which guaranteed to Leander the fidelity of his troops, he flew back again to the princess, leaving orders with his army to return by easy marches to his own dominions.

The princess had retired for the night, and the respect which Leander had for her prevented his entering her apartment. He went at once to his own, for he had always slept in the lower one. He was sufficiently fatigued to need repose, and in consequence forgot to fasten the door as carefully as usual. The princess suffered from heat and anxiety. She rose before dawn, and descended in dishabille to the lower apartment. But what was her astonishment to see Leander asleep on the bed! She had plenty of time to examine his features without being seen, and to convince herself that he was the person whose portrait she possessed in the diamond box. "It is not possible," said she, "that this should be a sprite; for do sprites sleep? Is this a being composed of air and fire, occupying no space, according to the description of Abricotine?" She gently touched his hair; she listened to his breathing; she could not tear herself away from him. One moment she was in raptures at having found him; the next she was alarmed at the consequences. Just as she was most earnestly gazing upon him, the fairy, her mother, entered with such a tremendous noise that Leander awoke, and started to his feet. What was his surprise and affliction at seeing his princess in the depths of despair. Her mother was dragging her away, and loading her with reproaches. Oh, what misery for these young lovers! They saw themselves on the point of being separated for ever. The princess dared not say a word to the furious fairy, she looked only at Leander, as if to implore his assistance.

He knew well that it was not possible for him to release her from the grasp of so powerful a person; but he sought, by eloquence and by submission, to touch the heart of the irritated mother. He ran after her, threw himself at her feet, implored her to have pity on a young king whose love for her daughter was unchangeable, and whose

greatest felicity would consist in rendering her happy. The princess, encouraged by his example, embraced her mother's knees, and declared to her, that without the king she could never be happy, and that she was under the greatest obligations to him. "You know not the degradation of love," cried the fairy, "and the treachery of which these gay deceivers are capable. They captivate but to poison us. I have too dearly proved it! Would you incur a destiny like mine?" "Ah, madam!" exclaimed the princess, "is there no exception? The assurances which the king gives you, and which seem so sincere, do they not satisfy you that I may safely trust him?" The obstinate fairy allowed them to sigh at her feet. In vain her hands were bathed with their tears; she appeared impenetrable; and no doubt would never have forgiven them, if the amiable fairy Gentille had not appeared in the chamber, more brilliant than the sun. The graces accompanied her, and she was followed by a troop of loves, sports, and pleasures, who warbled a thousand new and charming songs, and frolicked about like children.

Gentille embraced the old fairy. "My dear sister," said she, "I am sure you have not forgotten the good service I rendered you when you desired to return to our kingdom. Without my assistance you would never have been received in it, and since that time I have never asked you any favour in return; but the moment has arrived when you can grant me an essential one. Pardon this lovely princess, and consent to her union with the young king. I will answer for his fidelity. Their days will be as a tissue of gold and silk. The alliance will afford you the greatest satisfaction, and I shall never forget the pleasure you will give me." "I consent to anything you wish, charming Gentille!" cried the fairy. "Come, my children, come to my arms; receive the assurance of my affection." With these words she embraced the princess and her lover. The fairy Gentille was in raptures of joy, and all her train commenced singing nuptial hymns, the sweet symphonies of which awoke the nymphs of the palace, who came running, in their light robes of gauze, to ascertain what was passing.

What an agreeable surprise for Abricotine! She had scarcely cast her eyes on Leander when she recognised him, and seeing him holding the hand of the princess, she doubted not an instant of their mutual happiness. The confirmation of it was the declaration of the fairy mother that she would transport the Island of Peaceful Pleasures, the palace, and all the marvels it contained, into Leander's dominions; that she would reside there with them; and that she would confer many greater gifts upon them. "Whatever your generosity may suggest to you, madam," said the king to her, "it is impossible you can make me a present equal to that bestowed upon me to-day. You have made me the happiest of men, and I feel convinced that you will find me also the most grateful." This little compliment very much pleased the fairy. She was one of the old school, in whose time people would compliment each other all day long on some thing as trifling as the leg of a fly.

As Gentille had thought of everything, she had caused to be transported to the palace, by the power of Brelic-breloc,[1] the generals and captains of the army raised by Furibon, in order that they might witness the splendid fête she was about to give on this occasion. She took enormous pains about it, and five or six volumes would not suffice to contain the description of the comedies, operas, runnings at the ring, concerts, combats of gladiators, huntings, and other magnificent diversions, which took place at these charming nuptials. The most singular circumstance was, that each nymph found amongst the brave officers whom Gentille had wafted to these beautiful regions, a husband as passionately attached to her as if he had known her for ten years. It was nevertheless only an acquaintance of four-and-twenty hours, but the little wand of a fairy could produce effects even still more extraordinary.

"Where have ye fled, ye happy days,
When, by the power of a fairy,
Good folks might 'scape a thousand ways
Out of the very worst quandary?
When, with a cap or flower, one might
Make any change, play any gambol—
Invisible, see every sight,
And round the world, through ether, ramble?
Leander a rich rose possess'd,
Which yielded money without measure;
Another rose the wearer bless'd
With perfect health—a greater treasure;
A third he had, which you must know,
I think, was less to be desired—
The truth or falsehood it could show
Of the fair lady he admired.
Alas! to such a case as this
The old quotation well applies—
In love, if 'ignorance is bliss,
'Tis,' indeed, 'folly to be wise.'"

[1] Literally, "without order," "any how," "higgledy-piggledy"—"breliè-breloque," "sans ordre," "inconsidérément;" but it is used in this instance as a substantive, implying whim, caprice, fancy, illusion; the term "breloque" signifying a toy, gewgaw, whim-wham; and "berloque," derived from the same root, illusion or confusion of the senses. "Avoir la berlue," is to see double, to be dazzled; and "battre la breloque," signifies to talk wildly, to be confused, to lose one's head—"être tout dérouté." "Berloquer" is also used to express trifling away time, which some of my readers may think I am doing at the present moment.

# PRINCESS PRINTANIERE

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who had several children, but they all died; and the king and queen were so very, very much afflicted, that it was impossible to be more so, for they possessed considerable property, and only wanted children to inherit it. Five years had elapsed since the queen had given birth to her last infant. Everybody believed she could have no more, because she fretted so excessively when she thought of all the pretty little princes she had lost.

At length, however, the queen found she was likely to have another. Day and night she passed in thinking how she could best preserve the little creature she was about to bring into the world, what name it should bear, what dresses, what dolls, what toys she should give to it.

It had been proclaimed by sound of trumpet, and bills had been posted up in all the highways, stating that all the best nurses should present themselves before the queen, that she might choose one for her child. Accordingly, behold them arrive from the four quarters of the world; nothing was to be seen but nurses with their babies. One day as the queen was taking the air in a great forest, she sat down, and said to the king, "Let us send for all the nurses hither, and choose one, for our cows have not milk enough to supply food for all these little children." "Most willingly, my dear," said the king: "come, let the nurses be summoned!" Lo! where they all appear, one after the other, making a fine courtesy to the king and the queen; after which they placed themselves in a row, each standing under a tree. When they were all arranged, and their majesties had admired their fresh complexions, white teeth, and fine persons, they beheld, advancing in a wheelbarrow, propelled by two filthy little dwarfs, an ugly little woman, whose feet turned in, whose knees touched her chin, who had a great hump on her back, squinting eyes, and a skin blacker than ink. She held in her arms a little monkey, which she suckled, and spoke a jargon nobody could understand. She approached to offer herself in her turn; but the queen, repelling her, cried, "Hence, you great fright! You are an ignorant creature to come before me dressed as you are! If you do not immediately retire, I will have you removed by force." The nasty old woman passed on grumbling excessively, and, dragged by her frightful little dwarfs, went and placed herself in the hollow of a large tree, from whence she could see everything that occurred.

The queen, who had ceased to think about her, chose a handsome nurse; but the instant she was appointed, a horrible serpent, which was concealed beneath some grass, bit her foot, and she fell down as if dead. The queen, much grieved at this accident, cast her eyes on another. Immediately an eagle came flying with a tortoise in its talons, and dropped it on the head of the poor nurse, which was shivered to pieces like a glass. The queen, still more afflicted, called forward a third nurse, who, in her hurry to advance, stumbled against a thicket, full of long thorns, and knocked out one of her eyes. "Ah!" cried the queen, "I am most unfortunate to-day. It is impossible for me to choose a nurse without causing her some mischief. I must leave the affair to my physician." As she arose to return to the palace, she heard peals of laughter. She looked and saw behind her the wicked old humpbacked woman, who sat like an ape with her swaddled monkey in the wheelbarrow, mocking the whole company, and particularly the queen. Her majesty was so enraged that she would have flown at and beaten her, feeling assured that she was the cause of all this mischief to the nurses; but the humpback, with three taps of her wand, changed the dwarfs into winged griffins, the wheelbarrow into a chariot of fire, and rose with it into the air, uttering loud threats and horrible shrieks.

"Alas, my darling, we are lost," said the king; "it is the fairy Carabossa! The wicked creature has hated me ever since I was a little boy, on account of a trick I played her, putting some brimstone into her broth. From that moment she has always sought an opportunity to be revenged." The queen began to weep. "If I could have guessed who she was," said she, "I would have tried to make a friend of her. I'm sure I wish I were dead!" When the king saw her so deeply afflicted he said to her, "My love, let us go and consult on what step we should take;" and led her away, supporting her by the arm, for she was still trembling from the fright into which Carabossa had thrown her.

When the king and queen reached their apartments they summoned their counsellors, caused all the doors and windows to be carefully closed, that nobody might hear a word that was uttered, and came to the resolution to invite all the fairies for a thousand leagues round to be present at the birth of the child. Couriers were despatched immediately with very polite letters to the fairies, requesting them to take the trouble to attend the queen's confinement, and to keep the matter a great secret, for they trembled at the idea of Carabossa's hearing of it, and coming to make some disturbance. As a reward for their trouble, they were each promised a hongreline [1] of blue velvet, a petticoat of amaranth velvet, a pair of slippers of crimson satin, slashed, a small pair of gilt scissors, and a case full of fine needles.

As soon as the couriers had departed, the queen set to work with all her maids and servants to prepare the presents she had promised the fairies. She knew a great many,

[1] A jacket or pelisse of the Hungarian fashion; whence its name.

but only five answered their invitation. They arrived at the very moment the queen gave birth to a little princess. Behold them quickly closeted to endow her with precious gifts. The first endowed her with perfect beauty, the second bestowed on her infinite wit, the third the faculty of singing admirably, the fourth the talent of composition both in prose and verse. As the fifth was about to speak, a noise was heard in the chimney, like that of the falling of a huge stone from the top of a steeple, and Carabossa appeared all begrimed with soot, and shouting as loud as she could, "I endow this little creature

"'With ill-luck in plenty, until she be twenty!'"

At these words the queen, who was in bed, began to cry, and beg Carabossa would have pity on the little princess. All the fairies said to her, "Alas, my sister! take off your spell again; what has this infant done to you?" But that ugly fairy kept grumbling to herself without making any reply, so that the fifth, who had not yet spoken, tried to mend the matter, and endowed the princess with a long life of happiness after the period of the evil spell had expired. Carabossa only laughed at this, and sang twenty satirical songs, as she climbed up the chimney again. All the fairies remained in great consternation, but particularly the poor queen. She did not, however, neglect to give them the presents she had promised; she even added to them some ribbons, of which they are very fond. They were magnificently feasted; and at their departure the eldest advised that the princess should be lodged, till she completed her twentieth year, in some place where she could see no one but her own female attendants, and confined strictly to that spot.

Thereupon the king had a tower built without a window, so that you could only see by candlelight. It was entered by a vault that ran a league underground. Through this subterranean passage everything was carried that was required for the nurses and the governesses. Every twenty paces there were massive gates that were kept closely shut, and sentinels were posted in every direction.

The princess had been called Printaniere, because she had a complexion of lilies and roses, fresher and more blooming than the spring. Everything she said or did was admirable. She acquired a knowledge of the most difficult sciences with the greatest ease, and grew so tall and handsome that the king and queen never saw her without crying for joy. She sometimes begged they would stay with her, or take her with them, for she found herself dull, without well knowing why; but her parents always put her off with some excuse. Her nurse, who had never quitted her, and who did not lack sense, described to her occasionally the appearance of the world, and she comprehended her instantly as well as if she had seen it. The king frequently said to the queen, "My darling, Carabossa will be outwitted; we are more cunning than she is. Our Printaniere will be happy in despite of her predictions;" and the queen laughed till she cried at thinking on the vexation of the wicked fairy. They had had Printaniere's portrait painted, and copies of it sent all over the world, for the time was approaching

for her to leave the tower, and they were desirous that she should be married. She only wanted four days of being twenty. The court and the city were in great delight at the prospect of the speedy liberation of the princess, and their joy was increased by the news that King Merlin wished her to be the wife of his son, and that he had sent his ambassador, Fanfarinet, to propose for her in due form.

The nurse, who told the princess all the news, informed her of this, and assured her that nothing in the world could be a finer sight than the entry of Fanfarinet. "Ah! how unfortunate am I!" exclaimed the princess. "They coop me up here in a dark tower as if I had committed some great crime. I have never seen the sky, the sun, and the stars, of which they tell so many wonders. I have never seen a horse, a monkey, or a lion, except in a picture. The king and queen say that they will take me out of this place when I am twenty; but they only say so to make me patient, and I am certain they will let me die here, without my having done anything to offend them." Thereupon she began to cry, so much—so much, that her eyes swelled as big as one's fist, and the wet-nurse, and the foster sister, and the cradle-rocker, and the dresser, and the nursery-maid, who all loved her passionately, began also to cry, so much—so much, that nothing was to be heard but sobs and sighs. It was a scene of utter despair. When the princess saw them worked up to such a pitch of grief she seized a knife and exclaimed, "There! there! I am determined to kill myself instantly if you do not find means to let me behold the grand entry of Fanfarinet! The king and queen will never know anything about it. Decide amongst yourselves whether you had rather I should cut my throat on the spot than that you should procure me this gratification!" At these words the nurse and all the others recommenced crying still more bitterly, and resolved unanimously that they would enable her to see Fanfarinet, or die themselves in the attempt. They passed the rest of the night in proposing various schemes, without finding any that were feasible, and Printaniere, who was almost out of her wits, continually exclaimed, "Never again try to make me believe that you love me! You would find plenty of ways if you did. I feel convinced that love and friendship could overcome every obstacle!"

At last they decided they would make a hole in the tower on the side towards that part of the city by which Fanfarinet would arrive. They moved the bed of the princess from the wall, and immediately set to work all together, and without ceasing day or night. By dint of scraping they removed the plaster, and then the smaller stones. They got out so many that at last they effected an opening, through which, with considerable trouble, you might have passed a small needle. It was through this aperture that Printaniere saw the daylight for the first time! She was perfectly dazzled by it, and as she continued to peep through this little hole she saw Fanfarinet appear at the head of all his retinue. He was mounted on a white horse that pranced to the sound of the trumpets, and curveted admirably. Six flute-players preceded him: they played the finest opera airs, and six hautboys echoed them; after them came the trumpets and

kettle-drums, making a great noise. Fanfarinet wore a dress embroidered all over with pearls, boots made of cloth of gold, a plume of scarlet feathers, ribbons in profusion, and so many diamonds (for King Merlin had rooms full) that the sun was not to be compared to him for brilliancy. Printaniere at the sight felt so completely beside herself that she could not move ; and after pondering upon it for a short time vowed that she would never have any other husband than the handsome Fanfarinet, that there was no probability of his master being so agreeable, that she had no ambition, that as she had managed to exist in a tower, she could live very happily with him, if it were necessary, in some country château, that she would prefer bread and water with Fanfarinet to chickens and sweetmeats with another. In short, she was so eloquent on the subject that her women were puzzled to imagine where she had acquired one quarter of the knowledge she displayed, and when they attempted to impress upon her a sense of her own dignity, and of the wrong she would be guilty of to herself as well as to others, she ordered them to be silent, without deigning to listen to them. As soon as Fanfarinet had arrived in the king's dominions the queen came to fetch her daughter. All the houses were hung with tapestry, and the windows filled with ladies ; some had baskets of flowers, others of pearls, or of what was better, excellent sugar-plums, to shower upon the princess as she passed.

They had commenced attiring her, when a dwarf arrived at the tower mounted on an elephant. He came from the five good fairies, who had endowed her on the day she was born. They sent her a crown, a sceptre, a robe of gold brocade, a petticoat of butterflies' wings of the most wonderful workmanship, with a casket still more marvellous ; so stuck full was it with jewels it was accounted priceless ; and such a mass of riches had never been seen before. The queen was ready to faint with admiration ; as to the princess, she looked upon it all with indifference, for she could think only of Fanfarinet. The dwarf was thanked, and had a pistole given him for drink, and upwards of a thousand ells of nonpareil of all sorts of colours, with which he made himself very handsome garters, a bow for his cravat, and another for his hat. This dwarf was so very diminutive that when he had all this ribbon on you could not see him at all. The queen told him she would find something very beautiful to present in return to the fairies ; and the princess, who was very generous, sent them several German spinning-wheels, with spindles made of cedar.

They dressed the princess in all the greatest rarities that had been brought by the dwarf, and she appeared so extremely beautiful that the sun hid himself for shame, and the moon, who is not over-bashful, did not dare peep out while the princess was abroad, She proceeded through the streets on foot, over rich carpets, the people crowding round her, and exclaiming, "Oh, how handsome she is ! Oh, how handsome she is !"

As she passed along in this pompous array, with the queen and four or five dozen princesses of the blood-royal, not to mention upwards of ten dozen who had arrived from various neighbouring states to assist at this fête, the sky began to cloud over, the thunder

growled, and rain and hail fell in torrents. The queen drew her royal mantle over her head, all the ladies did the same with their upper petticoats, and Printaniere was about to follow their example, when a noise was heard in the air of more than a thousand ravens, screech owls, crows, and other ill-omened birds, who by their croaking and hooting boded nothing good. At the same moment a horrible owl of prodigious size came flying at full speed, holding in his beak a scarf of spiders' web, embroidered with bats' wings, and let it fall upon the shoulders of Printaniere, amid long and loud shrieks of laughter, which proved too surely that it was a wicked trick of the fairy Carabossa.

At this melancholy sight everybody began to weep, and the queen, more afflicted than any one, tried to pull off the black scarf; but it seemed nailed to her daughter's shoulders. "Ah!" cried she, "this is our enemy's doing! Nothing can appease her! In vain have I sent her fifty pounds of sweetmeats, as much double-refined sugar, and two Mayence hams; they have gone for nothing with her!"

Whilst thus the queen gave vent to her sorrow, the whole company got wet through to their skins. Printaniere, thinking of nothing but the ambassador, hastened on without saying a single word. Provided she could but charm him, she cared neither for Carabossa nor her unlucky scarf. She wondered to herself that he did not come to meet her, when suddenly she saw him advancing in company with the king. Immediately the trumpets, drums, and violins executed a lively flourish. The shouts of the crowd were redoubled, and the general manifestations of joy were extraordinary.

Fanfarinet had considerable sense; but when he saw the beautiful Printaniere in all her grace and majesty, he was so enchanted that, instead of speaking, he could do nothing but stutter; one would have thought he was tipsy, although he certainly had taken nothing but a cup of chocolate. He was in despair at finding that he had forgotten, in the twinkling of an eye, an oration he had studied every day for many months, and that he was so perfect in he could have spoken it in his sleep.

While torturing his memory to recover it, he kept bowing profoundly to the princess, who, in return, made him half a dozen courtesies without any remark. At length she commenced the conversation; and to relieve him from the embarrassment in which she perceived him to be thrown, she said, "My Lord Fanfarinet, I can easily imagine that all your ideas are of the most charming description. I give you credit for the possession of infinite wit. But let us hasten to the palace. It pours in torrents; it is the wicked Carabossa who is drenching us in this way. When we are once under shelter, we may laugh at her malice." He replied, with much gallantry, "That the fairy had wisely foreseen the conflagration that such bright eyes were certain to cause, and had sent a deluge of water to keep it under." With these words he offered his hand to lead her to the palace. She said to him, in a whisper, "I entertain sentiments for you which you would never imagine if I did not express them to you myself. It is not without some pain that I do so: but '*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*' Know therefore, my lord ambassador, that it is with admiration I saw you mounted on your beautiful prancing

horse; that I regretted you came hither on any person's account but your own. If you have as much courage as I have, we will not fail to find a remedy for this evil. Instead of marrying you in the name of your master, I will marry you in your own. I know that you are not a prince; but you please me as much as if you were one. We will fly together to some safe retreat. It will make a great talk for a time, and then some one will do the same thing, or worse, and the world will leave me alone to talk about her, and I shall have the gratification of being your wife."

Fanfarinet thought he was dreaming, for Printaniere was a princess of such marvellous beauty and accomplishments, that but for this extraordinary fancy he never could have hoped for such an honour. He was unable even to answer her. Had they been alone he would have flung himself at her feet; he took, however, the liberty of squeezing her hand so hard that he hurt her little finger desperately; but she did not cry out, she was so exceedingly fond of him.

As she entered the palace it resounded with the music of a thousand different instruments, with the strains of which voices, almost celestial, blended in such exquisite harmony that the listeners dared scarcely breathe for fear of making so much noise as would drown the softest note of it.

After the king had kissed his daughter on the forehead and on both cheeks, he said to her, "My pretty little lamb (for he called her by all sorts of endearing names), will you not be glad to marry the son of the great King Merlin? Here is Lord Fanfarinet, who will be proxy for him, and conduct you to the finest kingdom in the world." "Certainly, father," said she, making him a low courtesy, "I will do whatever you please, provided my good mother consents." "I consent, my darling," said the queen, embracing her. "So, quick! let them serve up the dinner;" which they did directly. There were a hundred tables set out in a great gallery, and in the memory of man never did people eat so much—with the exception of Printaniere and Fanfarinet, who cared only to look at each other, and were so lost in their own thoughts that they forgot everything around them.

After the banquet there was a ball, a ballet, and a play; but it was already so late, and they had eaten so much, that, notwithstanding all this, the company slept as they stood. The king and queen, overpowered with sleep, flung themselves on a couch, the majority of the ladies and gentlemen snored, the musicians played out of tune, and the actors did not know what they were saying. Our lovers only were as lively as mice, and made a hundred little signs to each other. The princess, seeing there was nothing to fear, and that the guards, stretched on their straw beds, were as fast asleep as the rest, said to Fanfarinet, "Take my advice, let us profit by so favourable an opportunity, for if I wait for the marriage ceremony, the king will place ladies in waiting about me, and appoint a prince to accompany me to the court of your King Merlin. We had better therefore be off at once as quick as we can."

She rose and took the king's dagger, the hilt of which was incrusted with diamonds,

and the queen's headdress, which her majesty had taken off in order to sleep more comfortably. She gave her white hand to Fanfarinet for him to lead her forth; he took it, and putting one knee to the ground, "I swear," said he, "eternal fidelity and obedience to your highness. Great princess, you sacrifice everything for me, what would I not do for you!" They quitted the palace; the ambassador carried a dark lantern, and through very muddy lanes they made their way to the port. They got into a little boat in which a poor old boatman lay fast asleep. They awoke him, and when he saw the princess so beautiful and finely dressed, with so many diamonds, and her scarf of spiders' web, he took her for the goddess of the night, and fell on his knees before her; but as they had no time for trifling, she ordered him to put off immediately. It was at great risk, for there was neither moon nor stars to be seen; the sky was still cloudy with the remains of the storm Carabossa had raised. It is true there was a carbuncle in the queen's headdress, which gave more light than fifty flambeaux, and Fanfarinet (according to report) might have dispensed with his dark lantern. There was also in the headdress a precious stone which could render the wearer invisible.

Fanfarinet asked the princess whither she wished to go. "Alas!" she replied, "I would go with you; I have no other desire in the world." "But, madam," rejoined he, "I dare not conduct you to the dominions of King Merlin. Hanging would be too good for me there." "Well," said she, "let us go the Island of Squirrels; it is sufficiently distant to prevent your being followed." She ordered the boatman to make for it, and, although his boat was a very little one, he obeyed.

As day began to dawn, the king, the queen, and all the court, having shaken their ears and rubbed their eyes a little, thought of nothing but proceeding to the marriage of the princess. The queen, in a great bustle, asked for the rich headdress she wanted to put on again. They looked for it in all the cupboards, and hunted for it even in the saucepans; but no headdress was to be found. The queen, very uneasy about it, ran up stairs and down stairs, into the cellar and into the garret. It was not to be found.

The king, in his turn, wished to wear his brilliant dagger. With the same diligence they rummaged for it in every corner, and broke open quantities of chests and caskets, the keys of which had been lost for upwards of a century. They found a thousand curiosities in them: dolls that shook their heads and moved their eyes, golden sheep with their little lambs, candied lemon-peel and sugared almonds: but all this could not console the king. His despair was so great that he tore his beard, and the queen, out of sympathy, tore her hair, for, truth to say, the headdress and the dagger were worth more than ten cities as big as Madrid.

When the king saw there was no hope of finding either again, he said to the queen, "My love, let us take courage and hasten to finish the ceremony which has already cost us so dear." He inquired for the princess. Her nurse advanced and said "My liege, I assure you that I have been seeking her these two hours in vain."

These words crowned the grief of the king and queen. The latter began to scream like an eagle that has lost its young, and fell down in a swoon. Never was anything seen so distressing. They flung more than two pailsful of Queen-of-Hungary water in her majesty's face without bringing her to herself. The ladies and maids of honour wept, and all the valets exclaimed, "What, is the king's daughter, then, lost?" The king, finding that the princess did not appear, said to his state page, "Go, seek Fanfarinet, who is asleep in some corner, that he may come and mourn with us." The pages sought everywhere, everywhere, and found him no more than they found Printaniere, the headdress, or the dagger. Here was an additional affliction which completed their majesties' despair.

The king summoned all his counsellors and officers; he entered, with the queen, a great hall, which had been hastily hung with black. They had put off their grand robes, and were each clad in a long mourning gown, girt with a cord. When they appeared in this attire, there was not a heart so hard that it was not ready to break. The hall resounded with sobs and sighs, and rivulets of tears ran down the floor. As the king had not had time to prepare a speech, he sat for three hours without uttering a word; at last he began thus:—

"Oyez! great folks and little! I have lost my beloved daughter Printaniere; I cannot tell whether she has melted away or been stolen from me. The queen's head-gear and my poignard, which are worth their weight in gold, have disappeared with the princess; and what is still worse, the ambassador Fanfarinet is gone too. I much fear that the king his master, not hearing any tidings of him, will come hither to seek for him, and will accuse us of having made him into mincemeat. Notwithstanding all this, I might have endured my misfortunes with resignation, if I had had any money; but I confess to you frankly, that the expenses of this wedding have ruined me. Consider, therefore, my dear subjects, what I can do to recover my daughter, Fanfarinet, et cætera."

Everybody admired the king's fine oration. Never before had he displayed so much eloquence. Lord Gambille, the chancellor of the kingdom, arose and spoke as follows:—

"Sire, we are exceedingly vexed at your vexation, and would willingly have sacrificed even our wives and our little children to have saved you from so much annoyance; but apparently this is a trick of the fairy Carabossa. The princess had not completed her twentieth year; and as the whole truth should be told, I observed that she was constantly looking at Fanfarinet, and he at her. Perhaps love has played one of his usual pranks on this occasion."

At these words, the queen, who was very hasty, interrupted him: "Take care what you are saying, my Lord Gambille," said she; "know that the princess is not the sort of person to fall in love with Fanfarinet; she has been too well brought up." Upon this, the nurse, who had overheard everything, entered, and flung herself on her knees before

the king and queen. "I come," said she, "to confess the whole affair to you. The princess resolved to see Fanfarinet or die. We made a small aperture, through which she saw him enter the city, and she vowed upon the spot that she would never marry any one else."

At these tidings, everybody grieved deeply, and acknowledged that the Lord Chancellor Gambille was a person of great penetration. The queen, exceedingly annoyed, rated the nurse, the foster-sister, the dresser, the cradle-rocker, and the nursery-maid so soundly that another word would have killed them.

Admiral Chapeau-Pointu, interrupting the queen, exclaimed, "Come, let us pursue Fanfarinet! There can be no doubt that that jackanapes has carried off our princess." Everybody clapped their hands and cried, "Let us go!" Off went some to sea; others travelled from kingdom to kingdom, calling the people together by sound of drums and trumpets; and when a crowd had assembled, saying, "Whoever would obtain a beautiful doll, dry and wet sweetmeats, little scissors, a robe of gold stuff, and a handsome satin cap, has only to inform us whither the Princess Printaniere has fled with Fanfarinet." The answer was always, "Pass on; we have not seen them."

Those who sought the princess at sea were more fortunate; for after a considerably long cruise, they perceived one night something blazing in the distance like a great fire. They were afraid to approach it, not knowing what it could be; but all of a sudden this light appeared to stop at the Island of Squirrels; for, in fact, it was the princess and her lover with the great carbuncle which shed this wonderful lustre. They disembarked, and having given the good man who had rowed them a hundred golden crowns, bade him adieu, warning him, as he valued the eyes in his head, not to say a word about them to any one.

The first thing he met with was the king's fleet, which he no sooner caught sight of, than he tried to avoid it; but the admiral, having espied him, sent a boat after him, and the good man was so old and feeble that he could not pull fast enough to escape. They soon came up with him, and brought him back to the admiral, who had him searched. They found on him a hundred gold crowns, brand new from the mint; for they had issued a new coinage in honour of the marriage of the princess. The admiral interrogated him, and to avoid answering, he pretended to be deaf and dumb. "Aha!" said the admiral, "tie me up this mute to the mainmast, and give him a sound lashing. It's the best cure in the world for dumbness."

When the old man found they were in earnest, he gave in, and confessed that a girl, more like a celestial than a human being, accompanied by a gentle cavalier, had commanded him to row them to the uninhabited Island of Squirrels. The admiral, on hearing these words, concluded immediately that it was the princess, and ordered the fleet to make sail for and surround the island.

In the meanwhile, Printaniere, weary after her voyage, finding a spot of green turf under some spreading trees, laid herself down, and fell into a sweet sleep; but

Fanfarinet, whose hunger far exceeded his love, did not allow her much time for repose. "Do you imagine, madam," said he, waking her, "that I can remain long here? I can find nothing to eat. Though you were fairer than day, I can't live upon love; I must have some more substantial food. I have good sharp teeth and a very empty stomach!" "How! Fanfarinet," replied she, "is it possible that this proof of my affection for you has so little effect? Is it possible that you can think of anything but your good fortune?" "I think much more of my misfortune," exclaimed the ambassador. "Would to heaven you were in your dark tower again!" "Fair sir," said the princess kindly, "be not angry, I pray you; I will go and hunt about everywhere, and perhaps I shall find some fruit." "I hope you will find a wolf that will eat you up," said Fanfarinet. The princess, much grieved, ran into the wood, tearing her fine clothes with the brambles, and her white skin with the thorns. She was scratched as if she had been playing with cats. (This is what comes of loving young men; it brings nothing but trouble!) After having searched everywhere, she returned, very sad, to Fanfarinet, and told him she had found nothing. He turned his back on her, and left her, muttering between his teeth.

The next morning they made another fruitless search; in short, they passed three days without eating anything but some leaves and a few cockchafers. The princess did not complain, though she was by far the most delicate. "I should be content," said she, "if I were the only sufferer, and should not mind being starved provided you had enough to eat." "You might die for what I care," replied he, "if I had but as much as I wanted." "Is it possible," rejoined the princess, "that you would be so little affected by my death? Is this the end of all the vows you have made me?" "There is a vast difference," said he, "between a man perfectly at his ease, who is neither hungry nor thirsty, and an unhappy wretch at the point of death in a desert island." "I am in the same danger," continued she, "and yet I do not murmur." "You would do so with a good grace, truly," answered he bluntly: "you chose to quit your father and mother to come rambling about here! Mighty comfortable we are!" "But it was for love of you, Fanfarinet!" said she, holding out her hand to him. "I could willingly have spared you the trouble," said he; and thereupon he turned away from her.

The princess, pained to the heart, began to weep so bitterly that it would have melted a stone. She sat herself down beneath a bush covered with white and red roses. After having contemplated them for some time, she said to them: "How happy you are, young flowers! The zephyrs caress you, the dew bathes you, the sun embellishes you, the bees love you, the thorns defend you. Everybody admires you! Alas! must you enjoy more tranquillity than I!" This reflection caused her tears to flow so plenteously that the roots of the rose-tree were quite soaked with them: she then perceived, to her great astonishment, that the bush became agitated, the roses expanded into fuller bloom, and the most beautiful one said to her: "If thou hadst not loved, thy lot would have been as enviable as mine. Who loves incurs the greatest of misfortunes! Poor princess, thou wilt find in the hollow of that tree a honeycomb; take it: but do not be simple

enough to give any to Fanfarinet." The princess ran to the tree, scarcely knowing whether she was in a dream or wide awake. She found the honey, and the moment she had it she took it to her ungrateful lover. "Here," said she, "is a honeycomb; I could have eaten it all by myself, but I preferred sharing it with you." Without thanking, or even looking at her, he snatched it from her and ate it all up, refusing to give her the least morsel of it. He added sarcasm even to his brutality, saying that it was too sweet, and would spoil her teeth, and a hundred similar impertinences. Printaniere, more than ever afflicted, sat down under an oak, and addressed it in much the same strain as she had the rose-bush. The oak, touched with compassion, bent down to her some of its branches, and said: "'Twere pity thou shouldst perish, lovely princess; take that pitcher of milk, and drink it without giving one drop to thy ungrateful lover." The princess, perfectly astonished, looked behind her, and immediately perceived a large pitcher full of milk. She could think of nothing from that moment, but the thirst which Fanfarinet might be enduring after eating more than fifteen pounds of honey. She ran to him with the pitcher. "Quench your thirst, handsome Fanfarinet," said she; "but don't forget to leave me a little, for I am parched and famishing!" He took the pitcher rudely from her, made but one draught of its contents, and then, flinging it on some stones, broke it in pieces, saying, with a malicious smile, "When one hasn't eaten one isn't thirsty."

The princess clasped her hands, and raising her beautiful eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Ah! I have well deserved this! I am justly punished for having left the king and queen—for having so thoughtlessly loved a man of whom I knew nothing—for having fled with him without considering my rank, or reflecting on the misfortunes with which I was threatened by Carabossa!" She then began to weep more bitterly than she had ever done in her life, and plunging into the thickest part of the wood, she sank exhausted at the foot of an elm, on a branch of which sat a nightingale that sang marvellously the following words, flapping his wings, as if he sang them only for Printaniere. He had learned them expressly from Ovid:—

"Love is a wicked god. The little knave
Ne'er grants a boon but to secure a slave;
Beneath the cover of deceitful joys,
His poison'd shaft the heart's repose destroys."

"Who can know it better than I!" exclaimed she, interrupting the bird. "Alas! I am too well acquainted with the cruelty of his shafts and that of my fate!" "Take courage," said the amorous nightingale, "and look in this thicket: thou wilt find therein sweetmeats and tartlets from Le Coq's; but do not again commit the imprudence of giving any to Fanfarinet." The princess needed not this prohibition to prevent her doing so. She had not yet forgotten the last two tricks he had played he; and besides, she was so very hungry, that she began at once to eat the almonds and the tartlets. The greedy Fanfarinet, having perceived her eating by herself, flew into such a passion, that he ran to her, his eyes flashing with fury, and his drawn sword in his hand, to kill her. She instantly uncovered the jewel of the headdress which rendered the possessor

invisible, and, keeping out of his reach, reproached him with his ingratitude in terms which sufficiently proved that she could not yet positively hate him.

In the meanwhile, Admiral Chapeau-Pointu had despatched Jean Caquet, with his straw boots, cabinet-courier in ordinary, to tell the king that the princess and Fanfarinet had landed on the Island of Squirrels; but that, being unacquainted with the country, he was afraid of ambuscades.

At these tidings, which gave their majesties much joy, the king sent for a great book, each leaf of which was eight ells long. It was the masterpiece of a learned fairy, and contained a description of the whole earth. The king learned thereby that the Island of Squirrels was uninhabited. "Go," said he to Jean Caquet, "and order the admiral in my name to land instantly. It was very wrong of him, and of me, to leave my daughter so long with Fanfarinet."

As soon as Jean Caquet had returned to the fleet, the admiral ordered a grand flourish of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, hautboys, flutes, violins, hurdygurdys, organs, and guitars. There was the most desperate uproar, for all these musical instruments of war and peace were to be heard incessantly throughout the island. Alarmed by the noise, the princess flew to her lover to offer him her assistance. He was by no means brave, and their mutual danger quickly reconciled them. "Keep behind me," said she to him, "I will go first; I will uncover the jewel that renders the bearer invisible, and with my father's dagger I will kill all I can of the enemy, while you kill the rest with your sword."

The invisible princess advanced to meet the soldiers. She and Fanfarinet killed numbers without being seen. Nothing was heard but cries of "I am slain!" "I am dying!" The troops fired in vain; they hit nothing, for the princess and her lover dived like ducks, and the balls passed over their heads. At length, the admiral, concerned at losing so many men in so extraordinary a manner, without knowing who attacked him, or how to defend himself, ordered a retreat to be sounded, and returned to his ships to hold a council of war.

Night was already far advanced. The princess and Fanfarinet took refuge in the thickest part of the wood. Printaniere was so tired that she lay down on the grass, and was just dropping off to sleep, when she heard a sweet little voice whisper in her ear, "Save thyself, Printaniere, for Fanfarinet would murder and devour you!" Quickly opening her eyes, she saw, by the light of the carbuncle, the wicked Fanfarinet, with his arm already raised to pierce her bosom with his sword; for, being very hungry, her whiteness and plumpness had tempted him to kill and eat her. She no longer hesitated about what she should do. She drew the dagger she had kept about her since the battle, and struck him with it such a blow in the eye, that he fell dead on the spot. "Ungrateful wretch!" she cried; "take that as the reward thou hast most deserved. Be thou an example for the future to all perfidious lovers; and may thy treacherous spirit never rest in peace!" When the first transports of her fury had subsided, and she thought of the situation she was in, she became almost as lifeless as him she had just

slain. "What will become of me?" she exclaimed, weeping: "I am all alone in this island! Wild bears will devour me, or I shall be starved to death." She almost regretted she had not let herself be eaten by Fanfarinet. She sat herself down trembling, waiting for daylight, which she was most anxious to behold, for she was afraid of ghosts, and particularly of the nightmare.

As she leaned her head against a tree, and looked up to the sky, she observed, on one side, a beautiful golden chariot drawn by six great tufted hens, with a cock for coachman, and a fat chicken for postillion. In the chariot was a lady, so handsome—so handsome, that she resembled the sun. Her dress was embroidered all over with gold spangles and bars of silver. She saw also another chariot to which were harnessed six bats. A crow was the coachman, and a beetle the postillion. In it was a frightful little monkey-faced woman, whose dress was made of a serpent's skin, and upon her head a large toad by way of a fontange.[1]

Never—no, never in the world was any one so astonished as the young princess. As she contemplated these wonders, she suddenly perceived the chariots advance to meet each other; and the lovely lady wielding a golden lance, whilst the ugly one grasped a rusty pike, they commenced a furious combat, which lasted more than a quarter of an hour. At length, the beauty was victorious, and the fright flew away with her bats. The former immediately descended, and addressing Printaniere, said to her: "Fear nothing, amiable princess, I came hither only to serve you. The combat I have fought with Carabossa was only for the love of you. She claimed the right to whip you for having left the tower four days before you were twenty, but you perceive that I took your part and have put her to flight. Enjoy the happiness I have won for you." The grateful princess flung herself at the lady's feet. "Great queen of the fairies," said she to her, "your generosity transports me! I know not how to thank you; but I feel that there is not a drop of this blood you have saved which I would not shed to serve you." The fairy embraced her three times, and made her more beautiful than she was before—supposing such a thing to be possible.

The fairy ordered the cock to proceed to the royal fleet, and tell the admiral to approach without fear, and sent the fat chicken to her palace to fetch the most beautiful dresses in the world for Printaniere. The admiral was so overjoyed at the tidings brought him by the cock, that he narrowly escaped a fit of illness. He came ashore instantly with all his men, including Jean Caquet, who, observing the hurry in which everybody left the ships, made as much haste himself, and threw upon his shoulder a spit, well loaded with game.

Admiral Chapeau-Pointu had scarcely proceeded a league when he perceived in one of the great avenues of the forest the chariot drawn by hens in which the two ladies were

[1] A knot of ribbon, so called from the celebrated Madame de Fontange, whose hair coming down during a hunting party at Vincennes, tied it up hastily with one of her garters. Louis XIV. was so pleased with the effect, that he requested her to continue to wear her hair so arranged; and the next day the ladies of the court made their appearance with a ribbon or top-knot, thenceforth known as a fontange.

riding. He recognised the princess, and was about to kneel, but she told him that all the honours were due to the generous fairy, who had saved her from the clutches of Carabossa; on which he kissed the hem of the fairy's robe, and paid her the finest compliment that was ever uttered upon such an occasion. Before he could finish, the fairy interrupted him, exclaiming, "I vow I smell roast meat!" "Yes, madam," said Jean Caquet, displaying the spit loaded with excellent birds; "it is only for your highness to desire to taste." "Most willingly," she replied; "less for my own sake than for that of the princess, who has need to make a good meal." They immediately sent to the fleet for everything that was necessary, and the delight of having found the princess, joined to the good cheer, left nothing to be wished for.

The repast being finished, and the fat chicken having returned, the fairy dressed Printaniere in a robe of gold and green brocade, powdered with rubies and pearls. She tied up her beautiful hair with strings of diamonds and emeralds, crowned her with flowers, and placing her in the chariot, all the stars that saw her pass thought it was Aurora who had not yet made her appearance, and said as she went by, "Good morning, Aurora."

After much leave-taking between the fairy and the princess, the latter said, "Shall I not, madam, have the pleasure of informing the queen, my mother, who it is that has done me such service?" "Beautiful princess," replied she, "embrace her for me, and say that I am the fifth fairy who endowed you at your birth."

The princess having gone on board the admiral's ship, they fired all the guns and more than a thousand rockets. She arrived safely in port, and found the king and the queen awaiting her, who received her with such caresses that she had no time to ask pardon for her past follies, though she had flung herself at their feet the moment she saw them. Paternal tenderness excused her completely, and all the fault was laid upon old Carabossa. At the same moment the son of the great King Merlin arrived, exceedingly anxious at not having heard any news of his ambassador. He came with a thousand horses and thirty servants, splendidly dressed in scarlet richly laced with gold. He was a hundred times more amiable than the ungrateful Fanfarinet. They took good care not to say anything to him about the little adventure of the elopement. It might perhaps have awakened a few suspicions. They told him the very plausible story, that his ambassador being thirsty, and endeavouring to draw some water to drink, had fallen into the well and been drowned. He believed it implicitly, and the nuptials were celebrated amidst so much joy that all past sorrow was entirely forgotten.

"Whatsoever love may urge,
Ne'er from duty's path diverge;
Suffer not, in any season,
Will to triumph over reason
Ever should that mistress kind
Rule the heart and school the mind
Curbing with her friendly rein,
Passions wild and wishes vain."

# PRINCESS ROSETTE

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who had two beautiful boys. They grew like the day, so well did they thrive on the excellent food provided for them. The queen never gave birth to a child without sending for the fairies, and begging them to tell her what would happen to the infant. Her next was a beautiful little girl, so handsome that you could not look on her and not love her. The queen having sumptuously entertained the fairies who had come to see her, said to them, when they were preparing to depart, "Do not forget your good custom, but tell me what will happen to Rosette" (the name they had given to the little princess). The fairies replied that they had left their conjuring books at home, and that they would come and tell her another time. "Ah," said the queen, "that bodes me no good; you do not wish to afflict me by predicting some misfortune: but I entreat you to let me know all—hide nothing from me." They made every sort of excuse, and only increased the queen's desire for information. At last the principal fairy said to her, "We fear, madam, that Rosette will be the cause of some great misfortune to her brothers; that some affair of hers will cost them their lives. That is all that we can foresee respecting this beautiful little girl, and we are very sorry we cannot tell you anything more agreeable." They departed, and the queen remained so melancholy that the king could not avoid seeing it in her face. He asked her what was the matter. She answered that she had been sitting too near the fire, and had burnt all the wool off her spindle. "Is that all?" said the king. He went up into the loft, and brought her more wool than she could spin in a hundred years.

The queen continued in low spirits, and the king again asked her what was the matter. She told him that walking by the riverside she had lost one of her green satin slippers. "Is that all?" said the king. He sent an order to all the shoemakers in the kingdom, and they furnished her majesty with ten thousand green satin slippers.

She still continued sad. The king again asked what ailed her. She told him that in eating too hastily she had swallowed her wedding-ring, which had slipped off her finger. The king knew she told him a falsehood, for he had the ring safe in his own possession. "My dear wife," said he to her, "you are not speaking the truth. Here is your ring, which I put for safety into my purse." The queen was much confused at

being caught telling a falsehood, for lying is the most disgraceful thing in the world, and she saw that the king was angry. She therefore told him what the fairies had predicted about little Rosette, and requested him to say if he could think of any remedy for the evil. The king was so much distressed that he said at once to the queen, "I do not see any other way to save our two sons than by putting to death the little girl whilst she is in her swaddling-clothes." But the queen exclaimed that she would sooner suffer death herself; that she never would consent to so cruel a deed, and that the king must think of something else.

The minds of their majesties being naturally occupied with this matter entirely, some one informed the queen that in a great forest near the city there was an old hermit who lived in a hollow tree, and who was consulted by people from all parts of the world. "I must seek him also," said the queen; "the fairies have told me the danger, but have forgotten the remedy." She rose very early, and mounted a beautiful little white mule shod with gold, two of her maids of honour accompanying her, each on a handsome horse. When they were near the wood, the queen and her ladies dismounted, out of respect for the hermit, and went on foot to the tree he lived in. He objected to the sight of females, but when he saw it was the queen he said to her, "You are welcome; what is your will with me?" She told him what the fairies had said about Rosette, and requested his advice. He told her she should put the princess into a tower, out of which she should never be permitted to step. The queen thanked him, made him a good present, and returned with her information to the king.

When the king heard this account he ordered a great tower to be built as quickly as possible, he put his daughter into it, and that she might not feel dull, the king, the queen, and her two brothers went to see her every day. The eldest was called the great prince, and the younger the little prince. They were passionately fond of their sister, for she was the most beautiful and amiable creature ever seen, and the least of her glances was worth more than a hundred pistoles. When she was fifteen the great prince said to the king, "Papa, my sister is old enough to be married, shall we not shortly go to her wedding?" The little prince said as much to the queen; and their majesties answered them evasively, saying no word about the marriage.

At length the king and queen were taken very ill, and died almost on the same day. Everybody was very sorry, there was a general mourning, and the bells tolled throughout the city. Rosette was inconsolable for the loss of her good mamma.

After the funerals of the king and queen, the dukes and marquises of the kingdom seated the great prince on a throne of gold and diamonds, with a magnificent crown on his head, and robes of violet velvet embroidered all over with suns and moons. The whole court then shouted three times, "long live the king!" and nothing was thought of but rejoicings.

The king and his brother said to each other, "Now that we are in power, we will take our sister out of the prison in which she has passed so many weary years." They

had but to cross the garden to reach the tower, which had been built in a corner of it, as high as possible, for the late king and queen intended the princess should remain in it all her life. Rosette was embroidering a beautiful robe on a frame before her; but when she saw her brothers, she rose, and took the king's hand, saying to him,

"Good morning, sire; you are now king, and I your little servant. I beseech you to take me out of this tower, where I am very dull;" and with that she began to weep. The king embraced her, and told her not to cry: that he had come to take her out of the tower, and conduct her to a fine château. The prince had his pockets full of sweetmeats, which he gave to Rosette, saying to her, "Come, let us quit this vile dungeon. The king will soon find a husband for you; don't afflict yourself any longer."

When Rosette saw the beautiful garden, all full of flowers, fruits, and fountains, she was so astonished that she could not utter a word, for she had never seen anything of the sort before. She gazed eagerly about her, now walking, now stopping, now gathering fruit from the trees, or flowers from their beds. Her little dog, named Fretillon, who was as green as a parrot, had but one ear, and danced to perfection, ran before her, bow-wow-wowing with a thousand jumps and capers. Fretillon amused the company amazingly. All on a sudden he ran into a little wood. The princess followed him, and never was any one so astonished as she was at seeing in this wood a great peacock with his tail spread, and looking so beautiful, so beautiful, so beautiful, that she could not take her eyes off him.

The king and the prince rejoined her, and inquired what she was amusing herself with. She pointed the peacock out to them, and asked them what it was. They told her it was a bird that was occasionally eaten. "What!" she exclaimed, "do they dare to kill such a beautiful bird and eat it? I declare to you that I will never marry any one but the king of the peacocks, and when I am queen I will take good care that none shall be eaten." Nobody can describe the astonishment of the king. "But, sister," said he, "where would you that we should find the king of the peacocks?" "Wherever you please, sire, but I will marry nobody else."

After she had made this resolution, the two brothers conducted her to their château, whither they were obliged to bring the peacock also, and place it in her apartment, for she was exceedingly fond of it. All the ladies, who had never seen Rosette, hastened to salute her and pay their court to her. Some brought her preserves, others sugar, others dresses of gold stuffs, beautiful ribbons, dolls, embroidered shoes, pearls and diamonds. She was entertained everywhere, and she was so well bred, so polite, kissing hands, &c., and courtesying when any pretty thing was given to her, that not a gentleman or lady left her dissatisfied with their reception.

Whilst she was thus keeping the best company, the king and the prince determined to find the king of the peacocks, if there was one in the world. They decided that a portrait of the princess Rosette should be taken, and they had one so finely painted that it did all but speak. They then said to her, "Since you will not marry any one but the king of the peacocks, we are about to set out together in search of him throughout the world. If we find him we shall be very happy. Take care of the kingdom till we return."

Rosette thanked them for the trouble they were taking. She said, "She would carefully govern the kingdom, and that during their absence all her pleasure would consist in contemplating the beautiful peacock and making Fretillon dance." They could not refrain from tears in bidding each other farewell.

Behold these two princes on their journey, inquiring of everybody, "Do you know the king of the peacocks?" Everybody answered, "No, no." They travelled on still further, and at last went so far—so far, that nobody has ever been such a distance.

They arrived at the kingdom of mayflies. Never before were seen so many. They made such a buzzing that the king was afraid he should never hear distinctly again. He asked one who seemed the most sensible amongst them, if he knew whereabouts he could find the king of the peacocks. "Sire," said the mayfly to him, "his kingdom is thirty thousand leagues from this place. You have taken the longest road to it." "And how do you know that?" said the king. "Because," replied the mayfly, "we know you very well, and go every year to pass two or three months in your gardens." The king and his brother embraced the mayfly—they became great friends, and dined together. They saw all the sights of the kingdom, admiring its curiosities, the smallest leaf on any tree in it being worth a pistole; after which they set out again to finish their journey; and, as they had learned the way, they were not long about it. They saw all the trees laden with peacocks, and every part of the kingdom so full of them, that you could hear them scream and talk at a distance of two leagues.

The king said to his brother, "If the king of the peacocks is a peacock himself, how does our sister mean to marry him? We should be mad to consent. A pretty alliance she would inflict on us. Some little peachicks for nephews!" The prince was no less troubled about it; "It is a most unfortunate whim," said he, "that she has taken

into her head! What could have induced her to imagine there was a king of the peacocks in the world?"

When they arrived at the principal city, they perceived it was full of men and women; but that they were dressed in clothes made of peacocks' feathers, and wore a profusion of them everywhere as very fine ornaments. They met the king, who was driving out in a fine little coach of gold and diamonds, drawn by twelve peacocks fully caparisoned.

The king of the peacocks was so handsome—so handsome that the king and the prince were charmed with him. He had long, curly, light hair, an exceedingly fair complexion, and wore a crown of feathers from the tail of a peacock. When he saw the two brothers, he judged that, as their dresses were of a different fashion to those worn by the people of the country, they must be foreigners, and to ascertain the fact he stopped his coach and ordered them to be called before him.

The king and the prince approached him, and having made their obeisance, said to him, "Sire, we have come from a great distance to show you a beautiful portrait." They took out of their portmanteau the grand portrait of Rosette. When the king of the peacocks had examined it attentively, "I cannot believe," said he, "that there is such a beautiful maid in the world!" "She is a hundred times more beautiful," said the king, her brother. "Oh, you are jesting;" replied the king of the peacocks. "Sire," said the prince, "there is my brother, who is a king as well as you. He is styled the king, and I am called the prince. Our sister, of whom this is the portrait, is the princess Rosette. We come to ask you if you will espouse her. She is beautiful and very virtuous, and we will give her a bushel of golden crowns." "Yes, truly," said the king, "I will marry her with all my heart. She shall lack for nothing at my court; I will love her excessively; but I declare to you that I expect she is as handsome as her portrait, and that if it flatter her in the slightest degree, I will put you to death." "Well, we consent," said the two brothers of Rosette. "You consent!" rejoined the king; "then to prison with you, and there remain until the princess shall arrive." The princes made not the slightest difficulty, for they were perfectly certain that Rosette was handsomer than her picture.

When they were in prison the king of the peacocks had them admirably attended to, and frequently went to see them, keeping in his own castle the portrait of Rosette, on which he so doted that he slept neither night nor day. As the other king and his brother were in prison, they wrote by the post to the princess, requesting her to pack up her clothes immediately and to come with all speed, as the king of the peacocks was waiting for her. They did not tell her they were prisoners, for fear of alarming her.

When she received their letter she was so transported with joy that she thought she should die of it. She told everybody that the king of the peacocks was found and desired to marry her. They kindled bonfires, fired guns, and made feasts of sweetmeats

and sugar throughout the kingdom. Every one who came to see the princess during three days had given to them a slice of bread and butter with jam on it, some wafers, and a glass of Hypocras wine. After she had been thus liberal she left her beautiful dolls to her best friends, and her brother's kingdom in the hands of the wisest old men in the city. She strongly enjoined them to take great care of everything, to spend very little, and save up money against the king's return. She begged them to preserve her peacock, and would take nobody with her but her nurse, her foster-sister, and her little green dog Fretillon.

They put to sea in a boat, taking with them the bushel of gold crowns, and clothes enough to change their dress twice a day for ten years. They did nothing but laugh and sing. The nurse asked the boatman, "Are we nearing—are we nearing the kingdom of peacocks?" He answered, "No, no." Another time she asked him, "Are we nearing? are we nearing?" He answered, "We shall be soon; we shall be soon." A third time she said to him, "Are we nearing? are we nearing?" He answered, "Yes, yes." And as soon as he had said so, she went to the end of the boat, seated herself beside him, and said to him, "If thou choosest, thou shalt be rich for ever." He answered, "I should like it much." "If thou choosest," she continued, "thou shalt gain some good pistoles." "I desire nothing better," replied he. "Well," said the nurse, "thou must help me then to-night, when the princess is asleep, to throw her into the sea. As soon as she is drowned I will dress my daughter in the princess's fine clothes, and we will conduct her to the king of the peacocks, who will be happy to marry her; and for thy reward, we will load thee with diamonds."

The boatman was very much surprised at the nurse's proposition. He said, it was a pity to drown so handsome a princess; that she excited his compassion. But the nurse produced a bottle of wine and made him drink so much that he could no longer refuse her anything.

As soon as it was dark, the princess lay down as she was wont; little Fretillon was snugly established at the bottom of the bed, moving neither foot nor paw. Rosette was sleeping soundly, when the wicked nurse, who was wide awake, went to fetch the boatman. She led him into the princess's cabin; then, without disturbing her, they took her up, with her feather-bed, mattress, sheets, and counterpane, the foster-sister helping them with all her might, and flung the whole into the sea, and the princess was so fast asleep that she never woke.

But, by good fortune, the feather-bed was stuffed with Phœnix feathers, which are very rare, and possess the property of never sinking in the water, so that she floated on her bed just as if she had been in a boat. The water, however, gradually wetted first the feather-bed and then the mattress, and Rosette, being incommoded by it, turned from side to side, and roused Fretillon. He had an excellent nose, and smelt the soles and the codfish so close to him that he began to bark, and bark so much, that he woke all the rest of the fish. They began to swim about, the great fish running their heads against the bed of the princess, which, having nothing to steady it, spun round

and round, like a whirligig. She was very much surprised. "Has our boat taken to dance on the water?" said she; "I have never been so uncomfortable as to-night;" and still Fretillon kept barking, and making a desperate pother. The wicked nurse and the boatman heard him a long way off, and said, "There is that little rogue of a dog drinking with his mistress to our good health. Let us make haste to land;" for they were just in sight of the city of the king of the peacocks.

His majesty had sent down to the beach a hundred coaches drawn by all sorts of rare animals There were lions, bears, stags, wolves, horses, oxen, asses, eagles, peacocks, and the coach intended to convey the Princess Rosette was drawn by six blue monkeys, who could jump, and dance the tight-rope, and play all manner of amusing tricks. They had beautiful harness of crimson velvet plated with gold. There were also sixty young ladies whom the king had selected to entertain the princess. They were dressed in all sorts of colours; gold and silver were the meanest ornaments about them.

The nurse had taken great pains to deck out her daughter. She had covered her with Rosette's diamonds, from head to foot, and dressed her in her friend's robes; but despite her finery she looked more ugly than an ape, with greasy black hair, squinting eyes, crooked legs, a great hump in the middle of her back—an ill-tempered slut, continually grumbling.

When all the servants of the king of the peacocks saw her come out of the boat, they were so surprised, so surprised that they could not speak. "What does this mean?" said she; "are you asleep? Come, come, bring me something to eat; you are a nice set of rascals; I will have you all hanged!" At this threat, they said to each other, "What a vile creature! She is as wicked as she is ugly! Here's a fine wife for our king! I am not surprised at it. It was not worth while to send for her from the other end of the world!" All this while she played the mistress, giving slaps on the face, and blows with her fist, for next to nothing, to everybody about her.

As her train was very numerous, she proceeded slowly. She sat in her coach like a queen: but all the peacocks that had perched themselves in the trees to salute her as

she passed, and had resolved to cry, "Long live the beautiful Queen Rosette," when they perceived her to be such a horrible fright, cried, "Fie! fie! how ugly she is!" She was excessively enraged and mortified, and said to her guards, "Kill me those rogues of peacocks who are insulting me." The peacocks flew away quickly and made game of her.

The rogue of a boatman, who witnessed all this, said in a whisper to the nurse, "Gossip, all is not well with us. Your daughter should have been handsomer." She replied, "Hold thy tongue, fool; thou wilt bring some misfortune upon us!"

They sent to inform the king that the princess was approaching. "Well," said he, "have her brothers told me the truth? Is she more beautiful than her picture?" "Sire," they replied, "it is quite sufficient for her to be as handsome." "Yes, surely," said the king. "I shall be perfectly satisfied with that. Let us go and see her," for he knew by the great noise they were making in the court, that she had arrived, and he could not distinguish anything they were saying, except, "Fie! fie! how ugly she is!" He thought they might be speaking of some dwarf or animal she might have brought with her, for it never could have entered his head that it actually applied to herself.

The portrait of the princess was carried at the end of a long staff, uncovered, and the king walked in solemn procession after it, with all his barons, and all his peacocks, followed by the ambassadors from the neighbouring kingdoms. The king of the peacocks was exceedingly impatient to see his dear Rosette. Mercy! when he did see her, he was nearly dying on the spot! He flew into the greatest passion in the world. He rent his clothes; he would not go near her—she so frightened him. "How!" he cried, "the two scoundrels I hold in prison are bold, indeed, to have made sport of me, and to have proposed to me to marry a baboon like that. They shall die. Go! Lock up instantly that impertinent girl, her nurse, and the fellow who brought them hither. Fling them into the lowest dungeon of my great tower."

On the other hand, the king and his brother who were prisoners, and who knew the day on which their sister ought to arrive, had put on their best clothes to receive her. Instead of opening their prison and setting them at liberty as they had hoped, the jailor came with some soldiers and made them descend into a cell, perfectly dark, and full of horrid reptiles, where they were up to their necks in water. Nobody was ever more astonished or more miserable. "Alas!" they cried to each other, "this is a sad wedding for us! What can have brought so great a misfortune upon us?" They knew not what in the world to think, except, that they were doomed to die; and they were completely overwhelmed with sorrow. Three days passed without their hearing a word. At the end of the three days, the king of the peacocks came and insulted them, through a hole in the wall.

"You have assumed the titles of king and prince," cried he to them, "in order to impose upon me and engage me to marry your sister; but you are nothing better than vagabonds, who are not worth the water you drink. I will find judges for you, who

will quickly try and sentence you. The rope is already twisting which shall hang you both." "King of the peacocks," replied the king in great wrath, "be less hasty in this matter, for you may have cause to repent. I am a king as surely as you are one; I have a fine kingdom, robes, crowns, and good money. Ha! ha! it's a fine joke truly for you to be talking of hanging us. Have we stolen anything from you, pray?"

When the king heard him speak so boldly, he knew not what to think, and he was tempted, at times, to let them go with their sister, and not put them to death: but his confidant, who was a downright courtier, encouraged him, saying, that if he did not take vengeance on them, everybody would laugh at him, and would think him a mean, petty sovereign, not worth a groat. He swore that he would not forgive them, and ordered their trial to take place. It did not last long. It was only necessary to exhibit the portrait of the real Princess Rosette by the side of the person who had presented herself under that title. Consequently they were condemned to lose their heads, as false traitors, who had promised to give the king a beautiful princess in marriage, and had only offered to him an ugly country wench. The court went in full state to the prison to read the sentence to the prisoners, and they declared that they had not been guilty of falsehood, that their sister was a princess fairer than the day: that there was some mystery which they could not understand, and that they demanded seven days' respite of the execution of their sentence, as in that time their innocence would probably be acknowledged. The king of the peacocks, who was greatly incensed, was very loth to grant them this favour: but eventually he consented.

Whilst all this is passing at court, we must say a word about the poor Princess Rosette. When day broke, she was greatly astonished, and Fretillon also, to find themselves in the middle of the sea without boat or assistance. She began to cry, and wept so bitterly that all the fishes pitied her. She knew not what to do, or what would become of her. "Assuredly," said she, "I have been thrown into the sea by order of the king of the peacocks. He has repented his promise to marry me, and to get fairly rid of me has ordered me to be drowned. What an extraordinary man!" she continued; "I should have been so fond of him; we should have lived so happily together!" Thereupon she wept more bitterly, for she could not help loving him.

She remained thus for two days floating on the ocean, first one side and then the other, soaked to her bones, with cold enough to kill her, and all but benumbed. If it had not been for little Fretillon, who imparted a little warmth to her heart, she would have died a hundred times over. She was tremendously hungry. She saw the oysters in their shells. She took as many as she chose and ate them. Fretillon had little liking for them; but he was obliged to eat something. When it grew dark Rosette became exceedingly frightened, and she said to her dog, "Fretillon, keep on barking, for fear the soles should eat us." He had barked all night, and the princess's bed was not far from the shore. On the coast there was a good old man who lived all alone in a little hut, which nobody ever came near. He was very poor, and cared nothing for

worldly goods. When he heard Fretillon bark he was quite surprised, for dogs seldom passed that way. He thought some travellers had lost their road, and charitably came out of his hut to direct them. All on a sudden he perceived the princess and Fretillon, who were floating on the water, and the princess seeing him, stretched out her arms and cried to him, "Good old man, save me, for I am perishing here; I have languished thus for two days!"

When he heard her speak so sorrowfully he had great compassion for her, and re-entered his dwelling to get a long boat-hook. He waded into the water up to his neck, and thought twice or thrice he should be drowned. At length he contrived to pull the bed to the shore. Rosette and Fretillon were vastly glad to be upon dry land. The princess thanked the good man warmly, and wrapping herself up in her counterpane walked barefooted into the hut, where he made a small fire for her with dry leaves, and took out of his chest the best gown of his deceased wife, with stockings and shoes, which the princess put on. Thus dressed like a peasant she looked lovely as the day, and Fretillon danced round her to divert her.

The old man saw plainly that Rosette was some lady of rank, for the coverlet of her bed was of gold and silver, and her mattress of satin. He requested her to tell him her history, and assured her that he would keep it a secret if she wished. She recounted the whole of it, weeping very much, for she was still under the belief that it was the king of the peacocks who had ordered her to be drowned. "What shall we do, my daughter?" said the old man to her: "you are so great a princess, accustomed to dainties, and I have nothing to give you but black bread and radishes. You will fare badly with me; and if you will take my advice you will let me go and tell the king of the peacocks that you are here. I am sure that if he had seen you he would have married you." "Ah," exclaimed Rosette, "he is a wicked creature, and will put me to death; but if you have a little basket let us tie it round my dog's neck, and it will be very unlucky if he do not bring back something to eat." The old man gave the princess a basket; she tied it round Fretillon's neck, and said to him, "Go to the best saucepan

in the city and bring me what may be in it." Fretillon ran to the city, and as there were no saucepans better than the king's he entered the royal kitchen, took the lid off the largest, adroitly possessed himself of its contents, and returned to the hut. Rosette said to him, "Go back to the buttery and bring me the best of everything." Fretillon returned to the buttery and filled his basket with white bread, muscadel wine, and all sorts of fruits and preserves. He was so laden that he could hardly wag.

When the king of the peacocks called for his dinner there was nothing in the saucepan or in the buttery. The servants all stared at each other, and the king was in a fearful rage. "Very well," said he, "there is no dinner for me; but take care that the spit is put down this evening, and that I have something very good roasted." When evening arrived the princess said to Fretillon, "Go to the city, enter the best kitchen, and bring me some nice roast meat." Fretillon did as his mistress ordered him, and knowing no better kitchen than the king's, stole into it softly, while the cooks' backs were turned, and took all the roast meat off the spit, so nicely done, that the mere sight of it gave you an appetite. He brought his basket home quite full to the princess. She sent him back immediately to the buttery, and he returned with all the royal preserves and sweetmeats. The king, who had not dined, being very hungry desired to sup early, but there was nothing to set before him. He put himself into an awful passion, and went to bed supperless. The next day at dinner and supper time it was exactly the same case, so that the king was without eating or drinking, because when he was ready to sit down to table it was discovered that everything had been carried off. His confidant, greatly disturbed, fearing the king would die, concealed himself in a little corner of the kitchen, and kept his eyes constantly on the pot that was boiling. He was much surprised to see a little green dog with one ear enter very softly, take off the cover, and put all the meat into his basket. He followed it to see whither it went. He saw it go out of the city, and followed it to the good old man's. Immediately he returned to tell the king that all his boiled and roast was taken day and night to the hovel of a poor peasant.

The king was much astonished. He ordered the man to be brought before him. The confidant, to pay court to the king, determined to go himself with the archers of the guard. They found the old man dining with the princess upon the king's boiled meat. They seized and bound them with strong cords, and secured Fretillon also.

As soon as they arrived at the palace the king was informed of it, who replied, "To-morrow will be the seventh and last day I granted to those impudent impostors. They shall die with these thieves who have stolen my dinner." So saying he entered the hall of justice. The old man fell on his knees and said he would confess everything. While he was speaking the king gazed on the beautiful princess, and pitied her tears, but when the good man declared that she was the Princess Rosette who had been thrown into the sea, notwithstanding the king was so weak and faint for want of food, he jumped three times for joy, ran and embraced her, and untied the cords with which she was bound, assuring her that he loved her with all his heart.

At the same time the princes were sent for, who, imagining that it was for their execution, approached very sadly, hanging down their heads. The nurse and her daughter were also brought out. When they looked at each other a general recognition took place. Rosette threw herself on the necks of her brothers. The nurse, her daughter, and the boatman flung themselves on their knees and prayed for mercy. The joy was so great that the king and the princess forgave them. The good old man was richly rewarded, and lived all the rest of his days in the palace. The king of the peacocks, in short, made every sort of amends to the king and his brother, proving his regret at having ill-treated them. The nurse restored to Rosette her rich clothes and her bushel of gold crowns, and the nuptial festivities lasted fifteen days. Everybody was satisfied, down to Fretillon, who from that day never ate anything but the wings of partridges.

" Heaven watches o'er us, and when Innocence
In danger stands, embraces her defence,
Delivers and avenges her. The notion
Of poor Rosette floating upon the ocean,
As doth the fabled Halcyon in her nest,
Drifting at pleasure of the reckless gale,
Awakens pity in each gentle breast.
One fears a tragic end to such a tale:
Perish she must, the reader can't help thinking,
Either amid the stormy billows sinking,
Or swallow'd up by some rapacious whale.
Fretillon was the humble instrument
Of Providence, and from the hungry fishes
Not only saved his mistress dear, but, sent
To find her food, brought her the daintiest dishes.
How many are there nowadays who need
The help of dogs of such a generous breed!
Rosette, from shipwreck saved, pardon'd her foes.
Oh you who on the authors of your woes
Would vengeance hurl, whate'er may be the cost,
Let her example on you not be lost;
But treasure up this lesson whilst you live—
The noblest vengeance still is—to forgive."

# THE GOLDEN BRANCH

ONCE upon a time there was a king whose austere and melancholy disposition inspired terror rather than love. He rarely suffered himself to be seen, and put his subjects to death on the slightest suspicion. They called him king Brun,[1] because he was always frowning. King Brun had a son who was not in the least like him. Nothing could equal his intelligence, his sweet temper, his liberality, and his general capacity ; but he had crooked legs, a hunch on his back which was higher than his head, squinting eyes, a wry mouth, in short, he was a little monster, and never had so beautiful a soul animated so deformed a body. Nevertheless, by a singular fate, he was doted upon by everybody whom he wished to please. He was so superior in mind to all around him, that it was impossible to listen to him with indifference. The queen, his mother, chose that he should be called Torticoli, either because she liked that name, or that the prince being actually all of a twist, she considered that she had hit upon the one most appropriate for him. King Brun, who thought more of the greatness than the happiness of his son, cast his eyes upon the daughter of a powerful sovereign, his near neighbour, and whose dominions joined to his own would make him the most redoubtable monarch on the face of the globe. He conceived that this princess was a very suitable wife for the Prince Torticoli, as she could not have any right to reproach him with his deformity and ugliness, being at the least as ugly and deformed as himself. She always went about in a bowl, her legs being out of joint, and was called Trognon. She was the most amiable creature in the world. It appeared as if heaven had been anxious to compensate her for the injuries of nature.

King Brun having obtained the portrait of the Princess Trognon, which he had applied for, had it placed in a great hall, under a canopy, and sent for the Prince Torticoli, whom he commanded to look with affection upon that picture, as it was the likeness of Trognon, his intended bride. Torticoli cast his eyes upon it, and turned them away immediately with an air of disdain, which offended his father. "Are you

[1] "Le Roi Brun." In my Extravaganza, founded on this story, I took the liberty of designating his majesty, King Brown ; but though the translation was literal, it did not so completely convey the idea of the author as the other sense in which the word "brun" is used, namely, that of dark, gloomy, dusky, &c. We say, in English, a man "looks *black*," when he frowns—not *brown*. "A brown study," implies deep thought, but not melancholy or anger. For the reasons I have stated in my Preface, I leave this name, as I have other proper names, untranslated.

not pleased?" said he in a sharp and angry tone. "No, my liege," replied the prince, "I shall never be pleased to marry a cripple." "It well becomes you," said the king, "to find faults in this princess, being yourself a little monster who frightens everybody that looks at you." "It is for that reason," added the prince, "that I object to form an alliance with another monster. I can hardly bear the sight of myself: what would be my sufferings with such a companion?" "You fear to perpetuate the race of baboons," said the king insultingly; "but your fears are bootless: you shall marry her. It is enough for me to command to be obeyed." Torticoli made no reply. He bowed profoundly and withdrew.

King Brun was not accustomed to encounter the least opposition. His son's refusal put him into an awful passion. He locked him up in a tower which had been built expressly as a prison for rebellious princes; but there had been none such for two hundred years, consequently everything was sadly out of order in it—the apartments and the furniture appeared of surprising antiquity. The prince loved reading; he asked for books, and he was permitted to make choice of any in the tower library. He thought, at first, that permission would be sufficient, but when he attempted to read some he found the language so obsolete that he could not understand a word of it. He laid them down, then took them up again, endeavouring to make out something of their contents, or at all events to amuse himself by their examination.

King Brun, satisfied that Torticoli would soon get tired of his imprisonment, acted as if the prince had consented to marry Trognon. He sent ambassadors to the king, his neighbour, to demand the hand of his daughter, to whom he promised perfect happiness. The father of Trognon was enraptured to find so advantageous an opportunity of getting her married; for everybody is not anxious to burden themselves with a cripple. He accepted the proposals of King Brun, and though, to speak the truth, he had not been greatly struck by the portrait of Prince Torticoli, which had been brought to him, he had it, in its turn, placed in a magnificent gallery. Trognon was brought thither to see it. As soon as she had looked on it, she cast down her eyes, and began to weep. Her father, incensed at the repugnance she evinced, took a looking-glass, and placing it before her, said, "You weep, my daughter! Ah! look at yourself, and then admit that you have no right to complain." "If I were in any hurry to be married, my liege," said she, "it would, perhaps, be wrong in me to be so fastidious; but I can bear my shame whilst I am alone. I desire no one to share with me the misery of beholding me. Let me remain the unfortunate Princess Trognon all my life, and I shall be contented—at least I will not complain." However excellent her reasons, the king would not listen to them. She was compelled to depart with the ambassadors who had been sent to propose for her. Whilst she is travelling in a litter, in which she was stuck like a stump, we must return to the tower, and see what the prince is about. None of his guards dared to speak to him. They had been ordered to let him grow melancholy, to give him bad food, and vex him with all kinds of ill-usage. King Brun knew how

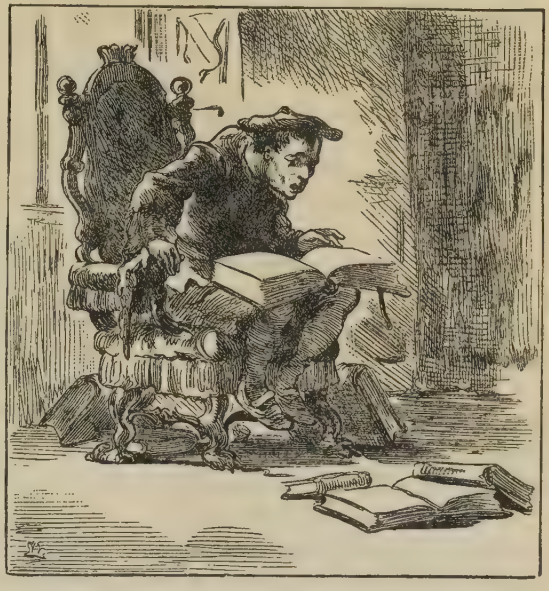
to make himself obeyed. If they did not do it for love, they did it from fear; but the affection they bore to the prince induced them to alleviate his sufferings as much as they could.

One day as he was walking in a long gallery, musing sadly on the fate which had caused him to be born so ugly and so repulsive, and to meet with a princess even more ill-favoured, he happened to look up at the windows, which he observed to be painted with such brilliant colours, and such well-designed subjects, that, having a particular taste for such beautiful works of art, he stopped to examine them; but he could not comprehend their import, for they represented scenes in stories which had been forgotten for many ages. One thing, however, struck him, which was, that there was a man in them so closely resembling himself that it appeared like his own portrait. This man was represented in the keep of the tower, examining the wall, in which he found a golden ramrod,[1] with which he opened a cabinet. There were many other subjects which took his attention, and in the greater portion of the windows he saw everywhere his portrait. "By what accident," said he, "have I been made to figure in these scenes; I, who was not born at the time they are supposed to have occurred: and by what fatal idea did it occur to the painter to amuse himself by designing a man like me?" He saw painted on the same glass the figure of a lovely young girl, whose features were so regular, and their expression so intellectual, that he could not take his eyes off it. In short, there were a thousand various subjects, and all the passions were so well expressed that he seemed absolutely a witness of the events in action, which were only represented by a mixture of colours.

He did not quit the gallery till it was too dark to distinguish anything in the painted glass. On his return to his room he took up the first old manuscript that came to his hand. The leaves were of vellum with illuminated borders, and the binding of gold enamelled with blue, so as to form ciphers. He was much surprised to find in the paintings the same subjects as those depicted on the windows in the gallery. He tried to read the manuscripts, but could not succeed. All on a sudden he observed that in one of the pages where there was an illumination representing musicians, the figures began to sing, and in another page, where there appeared players at Basset and Trictrac, the cards and dice were in motion. He turned over leaf, and saw people dancing at a ball; all the ladies in full dress, and of marvellous beauty. He turned again, and smelt the savoury fumes of a capital dinner. The little figures were all eating; the largest was not a quarter of an inch in height; and one of them, turning towards the prince, said to him, "To your good health, Torticoli! strive to restore our queen to us. If you do so, it will be well for you; if you do not, it will be ill for you." At these

[1] "Tire-bourre." At the period these stories were written, the ramrod was called "the scouring-stick of a piece," and a "tire-bourre" signified the worm or screw by which the charge was drawn of a gun or cannon (*vide* Cotgrave). I have used the word ramrod, as the nearest to the original that was comprehensible to the modern reader; the combination of the two instruments at the present day being, I trust, a sufficient apology for the anachronism, if one be necessary.

words the prince was seized with such a violent panic (for he had been trembling for some time), that he let the book drop on one side and fell on the other like a dead man. At the noise of his fall his keepers ran in. They loved him dearly, and neglected nothing to recover him from his swoon. As soon as he was able to speak, they asked what was the matter with him. He replied that he was so weak for want of proper food that his mind wandered; and his imagination being worked upon, he had fancied he had seen and heard such wonderful things in that book that he was panic-struck. His guardians, much afflicted, gave him something good to eat, in spite of the king's prohibition. When he had eaten, he took up the book again before them, and no longer found anything he had seen in it. This convinced him that he had been under a delusion.



He returned the next day to the gallery. He saw the figures again in the windows, moving, promenading in avenues, hunting stags and hares, fishing, and building tiny houses, for they were very small miniatures, and his portrait was to be seen in every one of them. It had a dress exactly like his own. It ascended into the keep of the tower, and discovered the golden ramrod. As the prince had eaten a good breakfast, he could no longer imagine this was the work of fancy. "This is too mysterious," said he, "for me to neglect the means of knowing more. Perhaps I may learn more in the keep." He ascended to it, and striking against the wall, he fancied that a portion of it sounded hollow. He took a hammer, and knocking down some of the wall near this spot, he found a golden ramrod, very neatly made. He was puzzling himself to think of what use it could be to him, when he perceived in one corner of the room an old worm-eaten wooden press. He tried to open it, but he could find no lock. He turned it about, and hunted on every side: but it was labour in vain. At last he espied a small hole, and suspecting that the ramrod might be useful, inserted the worm of it, and then pulling with all his might he opened the press. But in exact proportion to the age and ugliness of its outside was the beauty and marvellous treasures of its interior. All the drawers were of engraved rock-crystal, amber, or precious stones. When you had taken out

one, you found smaller drawers at the sides, above, below, and at the back, separated by partitions of mother-of-pearl. On taking out these partitions and opening the drawer each appeared full of the most splendid weapons in the world, rich crowns, admirable portraits. Prince Torticoli was enchanted: he was never tired of opening drawers. As length he found a little key made of a single emerald, with which he o; ened a golden door at the back of the press. He was dazzled by the brilliancy of a carbuncle which formed a large box. He pulled it quickly out of the recess; but what were his feelings when he found it was full of blood, in which was the hand of a man, cut off at the wrist, but still grasping a miniature case!

At this sight Torticoli shuddered; his hair stood on end; his trembling limbs could scarcely support him. He sat down upon the floor still holding the box. Turning his eyes from so shocking a sight, he was greatly tempted to replace the box where he had found it; but it occurred to him that all these circumstances could not have happened without the existence of some great mysteries. He remembered what the little figure in the book had said to him, that accordingly as he acted, it would be well or ill for him. He had as much to fear from the future as from the present; and finally reproaching himself for a timidity unworthy a great mind, he made an effort, and fixing his eyes on the hand, "Oh, unfortunate hand!" he exclaimed, "canst thou not by some signs acquaint me with thy sad adventure? If I have the power to serve thee, assure thyself of the generosity of my heart!"

The hand at these words appeared agitated, and moving its fingers, made signs to him, the purport of which he comprehended as perfectly as if it had been conveyed in words by the most eloquent lips. "Learn," said the hand, "that thou canst do everything for him from whom the barbarity of a jealous monster has separated me. Thou seest in this miniature the portrait of the adorable beauty, who is the cause of my misfortune. Go straightway to the gallery: notice the spot on which the sun's rays most brightly fall; search, and thou wilt discover my treasure." The hand then ceased to move. The prince put several questions to it, to which it returned no answer. "What shall I do with you?" he added. The hand made fresh signs, by which he understood that he was to replace it in the press. He did so, and shut up everything again; hid the ramrod in the wall where he had found it; and being now a little accustomed to prodigies, descended to the gallery.

On his entrance the windows began to clatter and make an extraordinary movement. He looked for the spot where the rays of the sun fell brightest; he perceived it was upon the portrait of a youth, so handsome and with so majestic an air that he stood enchanted by it. On lifting the picture, he found the wainscot of ebony with mouldings of gold, as throughout the rest of the gallery. He knew not how to remove it, or whether he ought to do so. He consulted the windows; he saw that the wainscot lifted up. He immediately raised it, and found himself in a vestibule all of porphyry, ornamented with statues. He ascended a large staircase of agate, the balustrade of which

was inlaid with gold. He entered a saloon of lapis lazuli, and traversing numberless apartments, in which he was enraptured by the excellence of the paintings and the richness of the furniture, he arrived at last at a little chamber, of which all the ornaments were composed of turquoises, and he saw on a bed of blue and gold gauze, a lady, who appeared sleeping. She was of incomparable beauty; her tresses, blacker than ebony, set off the whiteness of her skin. She seemed to be uneasy in her slumbers. Her features had an air of melancholy in them, and like those of an invalid.

The prince, fearing to wake her, approached softly. He heard her speaking, and listening with great attention to her words, he caught these few sentences, broken by sighs: "Dost thou imagine, perfidious one, that I can love thee, when thou hast separated me from my beloved Trasimene? What! before my eyes thou hast dared divide a hand so dear, from an arm which must ever be dreaded by thee! Is it by such arts thou pretendest to prove to me thy respect and thy affection? Ah, Trasimene, my dear lover! must I never see thee more?" The prince observed that the tears found a passage through her closed lids, and trickling down her cheeks resembled those shed by Aurora.

He remained as if immovable at the foot of the bed, not knowing whether he ought to wake her, or leave her still longer in so sad a slumber. It was already clear to him that Trasimene was her lover, and that he had found his hand in the donjon. A thousand confused thoughts were passing through his brain upon so many different subjects, when he heard a charming melody. It was formed by the voices of nightingales and canary birds, who sang with such perfect harmony that they surpassed the most agreeable vocalists. At the same instant an eagle of extraordinary size entered the apartment. He flew gently, holding in his talons a golden branch laden with rubies, in bunches like cherries. He fixed his eyes steadily on the lovely sleeper. He appeared to gaze on her as though she was the sun, and spreading his great wings hovered before her, now rising, now sinking almost at her feet.

After some few moments, he turned towards the prince and approached him, placing in his hand the branch with its golden ruby cherries. The singing birds raised their voices till the notes pierced the roof of the palace. The prince interpreted with so much judgment the various incidents which succeeded each other, that he concluded that the lady was enchanted, and that the honour of so glorious an adventure was reserved for him. He advanced towards her, bent one knee to the ground, touched her with the branch, and said, "Beautiful and charming creature, now sleeping under an influence which is unknown to me, I conjure you, in the name of Trasimene, to resume all those faculties which you appear to have been deprived of." The lady opened her eyes, perceived the eagle, and exclaimed, "Stay, dear lover, stay!" But the royal bird uttered a piercing and sorrowful cry and flew away with his little feathered musicians.

The lady turning, at the same time, towards Torticoli, said to him, "I obeyed the impulse of love before that of gratitude. I am aware that I owe everything to you, and

that you have restored me to the light of heaven, which I have been deprived of for two hundred years. The enchanter who loved me, and has made me suffer so many ills, has reserved for you this great adventure. I have the power to serve you, and passionately desire to do so. Let me know your wishes. I will use all the fairy power which I possess in a sovereign degree, to render you happy." "Madam," replied the prince, "if your science enables you to penetrate the secrets of the heart, it is easy for you to know that, notwithstanding the misfortunes which overwhelm me, I am less to be pitied than many others." "That is owing to your good sense," replied the fairy; "but after all, do not permit me to incur the shame of ingratitude towards you. What do you desire? My power is unlimited. Ask anything." "I desire," replied Torticoli, "to restore to you the handsome Trasimene, for whom you so constantly sigh." "You are too generous," said the lady, "to prefer my interests to your own. That great work must be achieved by another person. I cannot explain further; know, only, that that person will not be indifferent to you. But do not longer deny me the pleasure of obliging you. What do you desire?" "Madam," said the prince, flinging himself at her feet, "you behold my frightful figure. They call me, in derision, Torticoli. Render me less ridiculous!" "Go, prince," said the fairy, touching him three times with the golden branch; "go, thou shalt be so accomplished and so perfect, that never man before or after this shall be counted thine equal. Henceforth be called Sans-pair; thou wilt be justly entitled to that name."

The grateful prince embraced her knees, and, by a silence which testified his joy, he left her to guess what was passing in his soul. She compelled him to rise. He gazed at himself in the mirrors with which the chamber was adorned, and Sans-pair could not recognise Torticoli. He was three feet taller: his hair fell in large curls upon his shoulders; his mien was full of grace and dignity; his features were regular; his eyes sparkled with intelligence; in short, it was a transformation worthy of a beneficent and grateful fairy.

"Why am I not permitted," said she, "to reveal to you your destiny? to warn you

of the shoals fortune will put in your path! to teach you the means of avoiding them! What gratification it would be to me to add that benefit to the one I have just conferred on you! But I should offend the superior genius that guides you. Away, prince; fly from this tower, and remember that the fairy Benigne will always be your friend." At these words the fairy, the palace, and all the wonders the prince had seen in it, disappeared. He found himself in a dense forest, more than a hundred leagues from the tower in which the king, his father, had confined him.

Let us leave him to recover from his natural astonishment, and look back to see, first, what is passing amongst the guards which his father had placed around his person, and secondly, what happens to the Princess Trognon. The poor warders, surprised that their prince did not call for his supper, entered his chamber, and not finding him, searched for him everywhere, in great fear that he had escaped. Their labour being in vain, they were in despair, for they made sure that the king, who was so terrible a tyrant, would put them to death; and after thinking over all the expedients likely to appease him, they decided that one of them should go to bed, and not allow himself to be seen; that they should say that the prince was very ill; that, shortly afterwards, they should pretend that he was dead; and that the burial of a log of wood would get them out of the scrape. This remedy appeared to them infallible, and they immediately began to put their plan into execution. The smallest of the guards was dressed up with a great hump, and put in the prince's bed. The king was informed that his son was very ill. He thought it was only said to move his compassion, and he determined not to relax in the least his severity. This was exactly what the trembling warders wished for, and the more they said on the subject, the more indifference to it was manifested by the king.

As for the Princess Trognon, she arrived in a little machine which was only a cubit in height, and carried in a litter. King Brun went to meet her. When he saw her so deformed, seated in a bowl, her skin covered with scales like that of a codfish, her eyebrows meeting, her nose large and flat, and her mouth reaching to her ears, he could not forbear saying, "Truly, Princess Trognon, it becomes you to despise my Torticoli. Know that he is very ugly; but, to speak the truth, he is less so than you." "My liege," said the princess, "I am not vain enough to be offended at the rudeness of your speech. I do not know that it may not be, in your opinion, a sure mode of persuading me to love your charming Torticoli; but I declare to you, notwithstanding my miserable bowl, and the defects I am full of, that I will not marry him, and that I prefer the title of Princess Trognon to that of Queen Torticoli."

The king's anger was exceedingly heated by this answer. "I tell you plainly," said he, "I will not be contradicted. The king, your father, should be your master, and I have become so, now that he has placed you in my hands." "There are matters," answered the princess, "in which we have the power to choose. I warn you that I have been brought hither against my will, and that I shall look on you as my most mortal

enemy if you attempt to force me into this marriage." The king, still more irritated, left her; and assigned to her an apartment in his palace with ladies to attend her, who were commanded to persuade her that the best thing she could do was to marry the prince.

In the meanwhile the guards, who feared being discovered, and that the king might learn his son had escaped, made haste to tell him that he was dead. At these tidings he was afflicted to a degree they could never have believed of him. He screamed, he howled, and looked upon Trognon as the cause of the loss he had sustained; he sent her to the tower, in the place of his dear departed.

The poor princess was as full of grief as astonishment at finding herself a prisoner. She was courageous, and commented, as she was justified in doing, on so harsh a proceeding. She imagined they would repeat her words to the king, but nobody dared to speak to him on the subject. She conceived also that she would be allowed to write to her father respecting the ill-usage she suffered, and that he would come and deliver her. Her projects on that score were useless; her letters were intercepted, and given to King Brun.

As she lived in that hope, however, she was less afflicted; and every day she went into the gallery to look at the painted windows. Nothing appeared to her so extraordinary as the number of subjects represented in them, and to see herself amongst them, in her bowl. "Since my arrival in this country," said she, "the painters have taken a strange fancy to depict me. Are there not enough ridiculous figures without mine? or would they, by force of contrast, set off to greater advantage the beauty of that young shepherdess, who appears to me charming?" She then gazed on the portrait of a shepherd, which she could not sufficiently praise. "How much am I to be pitied," said she, "degraded by nature to such an extent as I am! and how happy are those who are handsome!" In uttering these words, the tears came into her eyes; then catching a glimpse of herself in a glass, she turned away suddenly; but was much astonished to see behind her a little old woman in a hood, who was half again as ugly as herself, and the bowl in which she pushed herself along had more than twenty holes in it, so much was it worn.

"Princess," said this little old woman to her, "you may have your choice between virtue and beauty. Your complaints are so touching that I have listened to them. If you choose to be handsome you will be a coquette, vain and very gay. If you choose to remain as you are, you will be virtuous, respected, and very humble."

Trognon looked at the person who spoke to her, and asked her if beauty was incompatible with virtue.

"No," replied the good woman; "but, in your case, it is decreed that you can only possess one of the two." "Well, then," exclaimed Trognon firmly, "I prefer my ugliness to beauty." "How! you had rather frighten all those who look on you?" rejoined the old woman. "Yes, madam," said the princess; "I would rather choose

to suffer all the misfortunes in the world than want virtue." "I brought with me, expressly for this purpose, my white and yellow muff," said the fairy. "By blowing on the yellow side, you will become like that admirable shepherdess, who appeared so charming to you, and you will be beloved by a shepherd whose portrait has more than once arrested your attention. By blowing on the white side, you can insure your continuance in the path of virtue, which you have so courageously entered." "Ah, madam," replied the princess, "do not refuse me this favour. It will console me for all the contempt with which I am treated."

The little old woman handed to her the muff of beauty and virtue. Trognon made no mistake about it. She blew upon the white side, and thanked the fairy, who immediately disappeared.

The princess was delighted at the good choice she had made; and whatever reason she had to envy the incomparable beauty of the shepherdess in the painted windows, she consoled herself with the thought that beauty passes like a dream; that virtue is a constant treasure and an unfading charm, enduring longer than this life. She still hoped that the king, her father, would put himself at the head of a great army, and release her from the tower.

She awaited the moment to behold him with impatience, and she was dying to ascend to the keep of the tower to see the arrival of the succours she expected. But how could she manage to crawl up such a height? She moved about on the floor of her apartment slower than a tortoise, and to ascend to any place, her women had to carry her.

Notwithstanding, she hit upon a rather peculiar plan: she knew that the clock was in the keep. She took off the weights, and put herself in their place. When they wound up the clock, she was hoisted up to the top. She looked eagerly out of the window that opened towards the country; but she saw nothing coming, and she retired from it to rest herself a little. In leaning against the wall that Torticoli, or, as we should now say, Prince Sans-pair, had pulled down and rebuilt but badly, the mortar fell out, and with it the golden ramrod, which made a tinkling sound as it fell near Trognon. She perceived it, and after picking it up, examined it to ascertain its use. As she had more sense than people in general, she quickly concluded that it was made to open the press, which had no lock to it. She succeeded in doing so, and was not less enraptured than the prince had been, at the sight of all the rare and elegant things she found in it. It contained four thousand drawers, all filled with ancient and modern jewels. At length she found the golden door, the box of carbuncle, and the hand swimming in blood. She shuddered, and would have cast it from her; but she had not the power to let it go, a secret influence prevented her. "Alas! what shall I do?" she cried, sorrowfully. "I had rather die than stay longer here with this amputated hand!" At that moment she heard a soft and sweet voice, which said to her, "Take courage, princess; thy happiness depends upon this adventure." "Oh! what can I do?" replied she, trembling. "Thou must bear that hand to thy chamber," said the voice, "and hide it underneath

thy bolster, and when thou seest an eagle, give it to him without losing an instant." Terrified as the princess was, there was something in that voice so persuasive, that she did not hesitate to obey. She replaced the drawers and the curiosities as she had found them, without taking a single thing. Her guards, who feared that she had escaped in her turn, not having found her in her room, sought for her, and were struck with surprise at discovering her in a place to which they said she could not possibly have mounted except by enchantment. She passed three days without seeing anything particular. She did not dare to open the beautiful carbuncle box, for the sight of the amputated hand caused her too much alarm. At length, one night, she heard a noise at her window. She got up as well as she could, and dragging herself across the room, opened the casement. The eagle flew in, making a great noise with his wings to manifest his joy. She hastened to present him the hand, which he took in his talons, and the next moment she lost sight of him. In his place stood a young man, the handsomest and best made she had ever seen. His forehead was encircled by a diadem; his dress was covered with jewels. He held in his hand a miniature: and commenced the conversation. "Princess," said he to Trognon, "for two hundred years a perfidious enchanter has detained me here. We both of us loved the admirable fairy, Benigne. I was accepted; he was jealous. His art surpassed mine, and determining to use it to my ruin, he commanded me, in an absolute tone, never to see her more. Such a prohibition suited neither my love nor my rank. I threatened him; and the fair one I adored was so offended at the behaviour of the enchanter, that in her turn she forbade him ever to approach her. The cruel monster resolved to punish both of us.

"One day that I was by her side, gazing with delight on a portrait she had given me, yet finding it a thousand times less beautiful than the original, the enchanter appeared, and with one blow of his sabre cut my hand off at the wrist. The fairy Benigne (so is my queen named) felt more keenly than myself the anguish of this wound. She sank insensible upon her couch, and immediately I found myself covered with feathers. I was transformed into an eagle. I was permitted to come daily to see the queen, without the power of approaching or awaking her: but I had the consolation of hearing her incessantly breathe tender sighs, and talk in her sleep of her dear Trasimene. I knew also that, at the expiration of two hundred years, a prince would restore Benigne to the light of day, and that a princess, by returning me my lost hand, would give me back my original form. A celebrated fairy, who interests herself in your glory, ordained that it should be so. It is she who so carefully locked up my hand in the press of the keep; it is she who has given me the power to prove to you this day my gratitude. Wish for anything, princess, which can give you the greatest pleasure, and instantly you shall obtain it."

"Great king," replied Trognon, after some moments' silence, "if I have not answered you directly, it is not that I hesitate to do so; but that I confess I am unused to such surprising adventures as the present, and that I fancy it is rather a dream than a reality." "No, madam," replied Trasimene, "it is not an illusion; you will experience the

effects, as soon as you please to tell me what boon you desire." "If I asked for everything I should require to make me perfect," said she, "whatever may be your power, it would be difficult for you to satisfy me; but I will confine myself to the most essential. Make my mind as beautiful as my body is ugly and deformed." "Ah, princess," exclaimed King Trasimene, "you delight me by so wise and noble a choice; but who is able to do that which is already accomplished? Your body, therefore, shall become as beautiful as your mind and soul." He touched the princess with the miniature of the fairy. She heard all her bones go crick crack—then lengthen—get into joint again; she rises, she is tall, handsome, straight; her skin is whiter than milk; all her features are regular; her air is majestic yet modest; her countenance intelligent and agreeable. "What a miracle!" she exclaimed. "Can this be me? Is it possible?" "Yes, madam," replied Trasimene; "it is you. The wise choice you made of virtue has brought about the happy change you enjoy. What pleasure it is to me, after all I owe you, to think that I was destined to contribute to it! But quit for ever the name of Trognon; take that of Brilliante, to which your intellect and your charms entitle you." At the same instant he disappeared, and the princess, without knowing what coach she came by, found herself on the bank of a little river, beneath some shady trees, in the most agreeable spot on earth.

She had not yet seen her face. The water of the river was so clear that she discovered, to her extreme surprise, that she was the very shepherdess whose poetry she had admired so much in the windows of the galiery. In fact, like her, she had on a white dress trimmed with fine lace, neater than any shepherdess had ever been seen in. Her waist was encircled by a band of little roses and jasmine; her hair was adorned with flowers; she found near her a gilt and painted crook, with a flock of sheep that were feeding by the river side, and knew her voice, and even a sheep-dog who appeared to know her and fawned upon her.

What reflections did she not make upon these novel prodigies! She had been born and had lived up to that moment the ugliest of all created beings, but she was a princess. She became fairer than the day, and she was only a shepherdess. She could not help feeling a little the loss of her rank. These various thoughts agitated her till she slept. She had been awake all night, as I have already told you, and the journey she had taken, without being aware of it, was an hundred leagues, so that she felt a little tired. Her sheep and her dog, assembled beside her, seemed to take care of her, and to pay her the attentions she ought to have paid to them. The sun could not cause her any inconvenience, though it was in the full blaze of noon; for the turfed trees screened her from its scorching rays, and the fresh and delicate grass on which she had seated herself seemed proud of so beautiful a burden. It was there

"The gentle violets were seen
Emulating other flowers;
Peering above the herbage green,
To scatter incense round in showers."

The birds performed the sweetest concerts, and the zephyrs held their breath, fearing to disturb her. A shepherd exhausted by the heat of the sun, having perceived from a distance this shady spot, hastened towards it; but, at the sight of the young shepherdess, Brilliante, he was so struck with astonishment that but for a tree, against which he supported himself, he must have fallen to the earth. In fact, he recognised in her the same being whose beauty he had admired in the windows of the gallery, and in the vellum pages of the illuminated manuscripts; for the reader will not doubt for a moment that this shepherd was no other than Prince Sans-pair. An unknown power had retained him in this country. He had become the admiration of all who had seen him. His skill in all sorts of exercises, his good looks, and his intelligence, distinguished him no less amongst the other shepherds than his rank would have done elsewhere.

He riveted his eyes upon Brilliante, with a curiosity and a pleasure which he had never felt before. He knelt beside her. He contemplated that assemblage of charms which rendered her perfection, and his heart was the first to pay that tribute to her beauty which none since had dared to refuse. Whilst he was in deep meditation, Brilliante awoke, and seeing Sans-pair near her in a very elegant shepherd's dress, she gazed at him, and instantly remembered him, for she had seen his portrait in the tower. "Lovely shepherdess," said he, "what happy fate has led you hither? You come, no doubt, to receive our worship and our vows! Ah, I feel already that I shall be the most eager to offer to you my homage." "No, shepherd," said she; "I do not presume to exact honours which are not due to me; I would remain a simple shepherdess. I love my flock and my dog. Solitude has charms for me, and I desire none other." "How! young shepherdess, you have come hither with the design of concealing yourself from the mortals who inhabit these lands? Is it possible," continued he, "that you would do us so much injury? At least, make me an exception, as I am the first who has offered his service to you!" "No," replied Brilliante, "I will not see you more frequently than the rest, notwithstanding that I already feel a particular esteem for you.

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He recognized in her the same being whose beauty
he had admired in the gallery.

But tell me where I shall find some respectable shepherdess with whom I may dwell, for being a stranger here, and of an age which will not permit me to live alone, I should be glad to place myself under her protection." Sans-pair was enraptured at being intrusted with this commission. He conducted her to so neat a cottage that it had a thousand charms in its simplicity. It was inhabited by a little old woman, who rarely crossed the threshold because she could hardly walk. "Here, my good mother," said Sans-pair, presenting Brilliante to her, "here is an incomparable maiden, whose appearance alone will make you young again." The old woman embraced her, and told her, with an affable air, that she was welcome, that she regretted she had so poor a lodging to offer her, but that at least she should occupy a good place in her heart. "I did not think," said Brilliante, "to find here so favourable a reception, and so much politeness; I assure you, my good mother, that I am delighted to be with you. Do not refuse," continued she, addressing the shepherd, "to tell me your name, that I may know to whom I owe this service." "They call me Sans-pair," replied the prince, "but now I will have no other name than that of your slave." "And I," said the little old woman, "I wish also to know the name of the shepherdess to whom I offer hospitality." The princess told her she was called Brilliante. The old woman seemed charmed with so lovely a name, and Sans-pair said a hundred pretty things about it. The old shepherdess, fearing that Brilliante was hungry, set before her a very clean bowl full of new milk with brown bread, new-laid eggs, fresh butter, and a cream cheese. Sans-pair ran to his cottage, and brought from it strawberries, nuts, cherries, and other fruits; and in order to stay longer with Brilliante, he asked permission to eat his dinner with her. Alas, how difficult it would have been for her to have refused him! She had great pleasure in beholding him, and whatever coldness she affected, she was well aware that his presence was not indifferent to her.

After he left her, she thought about him for a long time, and he of her. He saw her every day; he led his flock to the spot where she fed her own; he sang beside her the most passionate songs; he played on the flute and the bagpipe while she danced; and she displayed such grace, and kept such perfect time, that he could not sufficiently admire her. Each in their own minds reflected on the surprising chain of adventures which had occurred to them, and each became restless. Sans-pair followed her assiduously everywhere:—

"In short, whene'er he found the maid alone,[1]
So well he painted all the rapture known
By two fond hearts in Cupid's bonds united,
That she discover'd shortly that the flame,
To which she scarcely dared to give a name,
By Love himself had certainly been lighted.
And seeing all the danger that she ran
An innocent and unprotected creature—

[1] I am at a loss to know why Madame L'Aulnoy ran the following very prosaic lines into rhyme, as they are simply a portion of the narrative. I felt, however, bound to follow her example.

She carefully avoided the dear man,
Although it sadly went against her nature;
In secret, too, her heart would oft implore her
To pity so respectful an adorer.
Sans-pair, who could not for his life make out
What caused the change he'd not been told a word of,
Sought her in vain, to satisfy his doubt:
Brilliante was never to be seen or heard of."

She avoided him carefully, reproaching herself unceasingly with the sentiments she cherished for him. "What!" said she, "I have the misfortune to love! And to love a miserable shepherd! What a destiny is mine! I preferred virtue to beauty. It appears that Heaven, to reward me for that choice, thought fit to render me handsome: but how unfortunate I consider myself in having become so! But for these idle charms, the shepherd I shun would not have striven to please me, and I should have escaped the shame of blushing at the sentiments I entertain for him!" These sad reflections always ended in tears, and her pain was increased by the state to which she reduced her amiable shepherd. He was, on his part, overwhelmed with affliction. He was tempted to declare to Brilliante the greatness of his birth, in the hope that a feeling of vanity might induce her to listen to him more favourably.

But he persuaded himself that she would not believe him, and that if she demanded a proof of what he asserted, he was not in a position to give her one. "How cruel is my fate!" he exclaimed; "hideous as I was, I must have succeeded to my father. A great kingdom makes up for many defects. It would be useless for me now to present myself to him or to his subjects; there is not one amongst them who could recognise me! And all the good the fairy Benigne has done me, in taking from me my name and my ugliness, consists in having made me a shepherd, and the slave of an inexorable shepherdess, who cannot abide me! Barbarous Fortune!" said he sighing, "become more propitious to me, or restore my deformity together with my previous indifference!"

Such were the sad lamentations which the lover and his mistress indulged in, unknown to each other. But, as Brilliante persisted in avoiding Sans-pair, one day, having determined to speak to her, and wishing to find an excuse which would not offend her, he took a little lamb and adorned it with ribbons and flowers, and put round its neck a collar of painted straw, so neatly made that it was a sort of chef d'œuvre. He was himself attired in a dress of rose-coloured taffety covered with English point, and carried a crook adorned with ribbons and a small basket; and thus equipped, no Celadon in the world had dared to appear before him. He found Brilliante seated on the bank of a rivulet which flowed gently through the thickest part of the wood. Her sheep were scattered about, browsing. The deep melancholy of the shepherdess prevented her attending to them. Sans-pair accosted her with a timid air. He presented to her the little lamb, and gazing on her tenderly, "What have I done, beautiful shepherdess," said he, "to deserve such terrible proofs of your aversion? You

are angry with your eyes for the least look they bestow on me! For my passion so offends you that you must fly me. Can you desire one more pure or more faithful? Have not my words and actions been always marked by respect as well as ardour? But, no doubt, your affections are placed elsewhere; your heart is prepossessed in favour of another." She replied to him immediately:—

"Shepherd, if I shun your view,
Should that give alarm to you?
By my flight you sure can tell
I but fear to love too well.
Were my absence caused by hate,
Would my anguish be as great?
Reason would from hence enforce me—
Love from reason would divorce me.
Even now my fluttering heart
Fails me when I should depart.
Oh, when love becomes extreme,
Stern, indeed, doth duty seem;
And how slowly do we move,
When we fly from those we love!
But, adieu! I must away,
Shepherd, from this fatal spot.
Die without you soon I may,
But, if you love me, follow not!"

As she said this, Brilliante left him. The amorous and despairing prince would have followed her, but his grief became so violent that he fell insensible at the foot of a tree.

Ah, severe and too cruel virtue! Why should you fear a man who has cherished you from his earliest infancy? He is not capable of misunderstanding you, and his passion is perfectly innocent. But the princess doubted herself as much as him; she could not help doing justice to the merits of that charming shepherd, and she was well aware that it is necessary to avoid that which appears to us too agreeable.

Never had any one undertaken such a task as she undertook at that moment. She tore herself away from the most tender and best beloved object she had ever seen in her life! She could not resist looking back several times to see if he followed her. She saw him fall half dead! She loved him, and denied herself the consolation of recovering him. When she reached the open plain she lifted up her eyes pitifully, and, folding her arms, exclaimed, "O virtue! O glory! O grandeur! I sacrifice to you my happiness! O destiny! O Trasimene! I renounce my fatal beauty! Give me back my ugliness, or restore to me the lover I abandon, without a cause to blush at my choice!" After uttering these words she stood, uncertain whether or not she should retrace her steps. Her heart prompted her to re-enter the wood in which she had left Sans-pair: but her virtue triumphed over her affection. She took the noble resolution never again to behold him.

Since she had been transported to this spot she had heard talk of a celebrated enchanter, who lived in a castle which he and his sister had built on the shore of the

island. There was nothing spoken of but their science. Every day produced some new wonder. She thought nothing less than magic power could efface from her heart the image of the charming shepherd ; and, without saying anything to her charitable hostess, who had received and treated her like a daughter, she set out on her road so absorbed by her sorrow that she never reflected on the peril she ran, a young and beautiful girl travelling all alone. She rested neither day nor night, she neither ate nor drank—she was so anxious to reach the castle, and be cured of her love. But in passing through a wood she heard some one singing. She thought she distinguished her own name, and recognised the voice of one of her companions. She stopped to listen, and caught these words :—

"Sans-pair, of all the village swains
The handsomest in form and feature,
Wore of a shepherdess the chains,
Brilliante by name as well as nature;
By every gentle art he sought
To move to pity his enslaver;
But the poor innocent knew nought
Of love, despite the hints he gave her.
Still in his absence she would sigh,
As though of peace fate had bereft her;
It wasn't often, by the bye,
Because he scarcely ever left her.
Stretched on the green turf at her feet,
He sang and piped in rustic fashion:
The maiden owned his piping sweet,
And caught the air if not the passion."

"Ah! this is too much!" exclaimed Brilliante, bursting into tears. "Imprudent shepherd, thou hast boasted of the innocent favours I have accorded thee! Thou hast dared to suppose that my weak heart was influenced by thy passion more than by my own sense of duty. Thou hast made others the confidants of thy mistaken hopes, and art the cause of my being thus made the theme of idle songs throughout the woods and plains!" She was so exceedingly annoyed by this circumstance that she believed she could look on Sans-pair with indifference, and perhaps with aversion. "It is unnecessary," continued she, "for me to go further in search of remedies for my pain ; I have nothing to fear from a shepherd in whom I see so little merit. I will return to the village in company with the shepherdess whose song I have been listening to." She called to her as loudly as she could ; but nobody answered her, and yet she heard the voice every now and then singing very near her. She became uneasy and alarmed ; in fact, the wood belonged to the enchanter, and nobody could pass through it without meeting with some adventure.

Brilliante, more bewildered than ever, hastened to make her way out of the wood. "Has the shepherd I feared become so little alarming to me that I should venture to see him again? Is it not rather that my heart, in league with him, attempts to deceive me? Oh, let me fly!—let me fly! It is the wiser course for a princess so unfortunate as I am!" She resumed her journey to the enchanter's castle, arrived at it, and entered

without any obstacle. She traversed several large courts, so overgrown by grass and brambles that it seemed as if no one had walked in them for a hundred years. She made a way through them with her hands, which got scratched in several places. She entered a hall, into which the light was admitted only through a small hole. The walls were hung with the wings of bats, a dozen live cats were dangling from the ceiling in lieu of chandeliers, squalling enough to drive you crazy; and on a long table were twelve large mice, fastened to it by their tails, each of which had in front of it a piece of bacon which it couldn't reach; so that the cats saw the mice without being able to eat them, and the mice trembled at the cats, while they were famishing with a tempting piece of bacon before them.

The princess was contemplating the torture of these animals, when she saw the enchanter enter in a long black robe. He had on his head a crocodile by way of a cap, and never was there seen so horrible a head-dress. The old man wore spectacles, and carried a whip made of twenty long, live serpents. Oh, how frightened the princess was! How she regretted at that moment her shepherd, her sheep, and her dog! She thought only of flight; and, without saying a word to this terrible man, she ran to the door: but it was covered with spiders' webs. As soon as she had lifted one she found another under it; and on lifting that a third appeared; she lifted that, and saw a new one, under which was another; in short, these filthy portières of spiders' webs were innumerable.

The poor princess was worn out with fatigue; her arms were not strong enough to hold up these webs; she would have sat down on the floor to rest herself, but was quickly compelled to rise again by long, sharp thorns that issued from it. She attempted again to escape, but still found one web under another. The wicked old man, who observed her, laughed till he was ready to choke himself. At length he called to her, and said, "Thou mayest pass the rest of thy life without succeeding in thy object. Thou seemest to me younger and more beautiful than the fairest I ever saw. If thou wilt marry me, I will give thee these twelve cats that thou seest hung up to the ceiling to do what thou wilt with, and these twelve mice that are on the table here shall be thine also. The cats are so many princes, and the mice as many princesses. The little rogues, at one time or another, had the honour to please me (for I have been always gay and gallant), but none would love me. These princes were my rivals, and more favoured than I was. Jealousy took possession of me; I found means to entice them hither; and as fast as I caught them, I transformed them into cats and mice. The most amusing part of the business is that they hate, as much as they formerly loved, each other, and it would be scarcely possible to imagine a more complete vengeance." "Oh, my lord!" exclaimed Brilliante, "change me into a mouse; I deserve it no less than these poor princesses." "How! my little shepherdess," said the magician, "wilt thou not then love me?" "I have resolved never to love," said she. "Oh, how silly thou art!" continued the magician. "I will cherish thee marvellously; I will tell thee stories; I will give thee the most beautiful dresses in the world. Thou shalt never move but in a coach or a

litter; thou wilt be called 'madam!'" "I have resolved never to love," repeated the princess. "Take care what thou sayest!" cried the enchanter angrily; "thou wilt repent it for many a long day!" "No matter," replied Brilliante; "I have resolved never to love." "Aha, thou too indifferent creature!" said he, touching her; "since thou wouldst be of a particular species, thou shalt for the future be neither flesh nor fish; thou shalt have neither blood nor bones. Thou shalt be green, because thou art still in thy greenest youth; thou shalt be agile and sprightly; thou shalt live in the fields, as thou hast done; and they shall call thee grasshopper." At the same moment Princess Brilliante became the most beautiful grasshopper in the world, and availing herself of her liberty skipped quickly into the garden. As soon as she was able to reflect on her situation, she exclaimed mournfully, "Oh, my bowl! my dear bowl! what has become of you? Behold the result of your promises, Trasimene! This, then, is the fate which has been reserved for me so carefully these two hundred years! A beauty as fleeting as that of the flowers of spring; and as a conclusion, a dress of green crape, a singular little form, which is neither flesh nor fish, and without blood or bones. I am very unfortunate! Alas! a crown would have covered all my defects; I should have found a husband worthy of me; and if I had remained a shepherdess, the charming Sans-pair wished but for the possession of my heart! He is but too amply revenged for my unjust disdain. Here am I, a grasshopper! doomed to chirrup day and night, whilst my heart, full of bitterness, invites me to weep!" Thus soliloquised the grasshopper, hidden amongst the tender grass that fringed the borders of a rivulet.

But what was Prince Sans-pair doing, bereft of his adorable shepherdess? The cruel way in which she had left him afflicted him so deeply that he had not the power to follow her. Before he could join her he had swooned, and he remained a long time insensible at the foot of the tree where Brilliante saw him fall. At length the coolness of the ground, or some unknown power, brought him to himself: he did not dare to seek her that day at her own home, and revolving in his mind the words she had said to him,

"Were my absence caused by hate,
Would my anguish be as great?"

he drew from them more flattering hopes, and trusted time and attention might win for him a little gratitude. But what were his feelings when, on going next day to the old shepherdess with whom Brilliante lodged, he heard that she had never been seen since the previous evening! He was ready to die with anxiety. He wandered away overwhelmed by a thousand conflicting thoughts. He seated himself sadly by the side of the river; he was tempted a hundred times to fling himself into it, and to end his misfortunes with his life. At length he took a bodkin, and scratched the following verses on the bark of a nettle-tree:—[1]

"Lovely fountain, river clear,
Smiling valley, fertile plain,

[1] Aliser, vide note, p. 24.

Scenes erewhile to me so dear,
Alas, ye but increase my pain!
The beauteous maid for whom I burn,
To whom your every charm ye owe,
Has left ye, never to return,
And me to weep for ever mo!
When morning in the east appears,
She brings my spirit no relief;
No sun can dry my ceaseless tears,
No night in slumber lull my grief.
Forgive me, O thou gentle tree,
That on thy breast her name I grave;
How slight the wou d to that which she,
The cruel one, my bosom gave!
My steel thy life untouch'd hath left—
Her cipher makes thee seem more fair;
But of his darling's sight bereft,
For death alone sighs poor Sans-pair."

He could not write any more, being accosted by a little old woman, who had a ruff round her neck, and wore a farthingale, a roll under her white hair, and a velvet hood. Her ancient appearance had something venerable in it. "My son," said she to him, "your lamentations are very grievous, I beg you to let me know the cause." "Alas, good mother!" answered Sans-pair, "I deplore the absence of a lovely shepherdess who flies me. I have resolved to search through all the world until I find her." "Go in that direction, my child," said the old woman to him, pointing towards the castle where poor Brilliante had become a grasshopper; "I have a presentiment that you will not seek her long." Sans-pair thanked her, and prayed the god of love to befriend him.

The prince met with no adventure on the road of sufficient consequence to detain him; but, on reaching the wood close to the castle of the magician and his sister, he thought he saw his shepherdess, and hastened to follow her. She glided away from him. "Brilliante!" he cried, "adorable Brilliante! Stay one instant! —Deign to listen to me!" The phantom flitted still faster, and in its pursuit he passed the remainder of the

day. When night came on, he saw a great many lights in the castle; he flattered himself his shepherdess might be there. He ran towards it, and entered without any difficulty. He ascended a staircase, and saw, in a magnificent saloon, a tall old fairy, horribly thin; her eyes resembled two burnt-out lamps; you could see through her jaws. Her arms were like laths; her fingers like knitting-needles,[1] a skin of black shagreen,[2] covered her skeleton; yet with all this she wore rouge and patches, pink and green ribbons, a mantle of silver brocade, a crown of diamonds on her head, and a profusion of jewels all about her.

"At last, prince," said she to him, "you have arrived where I have long wished to see you. Think no more of your little shepherdess; a passion for one so much your inferior should make you blush. I am the queen of meteors. I am your friend, and can be of infinite service to you if you love me." "Love you!" exclaimed the prince, looking at her contemptuously; "love you, madam! Am I master of my heart? No; I will never be unfaithful; and I feel that even could I change, it is not you who would ever be the object of my affections. Choose amongst your meteors some influence which may suit you. Love the air, love the winds, and leave mortals in peace."

The fairy was fierce and passionate; with two blows of her wand she filled the gallery with frightful monsters, against whom the prince was obliged to exert all his skill and courage. Some had several heads and arms, others the forms of centaurs and sirens. There were lions with human faces, sphinxes, and flying dragons. Sans-pair had only his crook and a small boar-spear, that he had armed himself with when he set out on his journey. The tall fairy interrupted the combat every now and then, and demanded whether he would love her. His answer was always, that he had sworn to be faithful, and could not change.

Provoked by his firmness, she conjured up the form of Brilliante. "'Tis well!" said she to him, "thou seest thy mistress at the end of this gallery. Think on what thou art about to do. If thou refusest to marry me, she shall be torn to pieces by tigers before your eyes!" "Ah, madam," cried the prince, flinging himself at her feet, "I will die with pleasure to save my beloved mistress! Spare her life, and take mine!" "I want not thy life, traitor," said the fairy; "it is thy heart and thy hand I demand." Whilst they disputed, the prince heard the voice of his shepherdess complaining, "Would you let me be devoured?" she asked him. "If you love me, resolve to do as the queen commands you."

The poor prince hesitated. "Have you then abandoned me, Benigne," he exclaimed, "after all your promises? Come, oh, come to our aid!" He had scarcely spoken, when he heard a voice in the air which pronounced distinctly these words:—

[1] "'Fuseaux,' *i.e.* "Fuseaux à dentelle."

[2] "Peau de chagrin noir." Shagreen is now an article almost obsolete; it was a skin much used during the past century for watch and spectacle cases.

"Leave all to fate: but be constant, and seek the golden branch."

The tall fairy, who had made sure of victory through the assistance of so many illusions, was ready to go mad at finding so formidable an obstacle in her path as the protection of Benigne. "Fly my presence!" she exclaimed, "wretched and obstinate prince! As thy heart is so full of flame, thou shalt be a cricket that is fond of heat and fire!"

On the instant, the marvellously handsome Prince Sans-pair became a little dingy cricket, who would have burned himself alive in the nearest fireplace or oven, had he not remembered the friendly voice that had encouraged him. "I must seek the golden branch," said he; "perhaps that will uncricket me. Ah! if I find my shepherdess there, what will be wanting to my happiness?"

The cricket hastened to leave the fatal palace, and without knowing which way he should go, commended himself to the protection of the Fairy Benigne, and set off without ceremony or weapons, for a cricket fears neither robbers nor accidents. At his first resting-place, which was a hole in the trunk of a tree, he found a grasshopper, so very melancholy she could not sing. The cricket, never imagining that she was a reasoning and intellectual creature, said to her, "Where art thou bound to, neighbour grasshopper?" "And you, neighbour cricket, where are you going to?" she asked in turn. This reply astonished greatly the enamoured cricket. "How!" said he; "can you speak?" "Why, you speak well enough," cried she; "do you think a grasshopper has less right to talk than a cricket?" "I can talk," said the cricket, "because I am a man." "And by the same rule," said the grasshopper, "I ought to talk more than you, because I'm a woman." "You have then suffered a fate similar to mine?" said the cricket. "No doubt," answered the grasshopper. "But, once more, whither go you?" rejoined the cricket; "I should be delighted to find we were likely to remain a long time together." "I heard an unknown voice," replied she, "in the air; it said, 'Leave all to fate, and seek the golden branch!' I fancied this could only be addressed to me, and without pausing, set out on my journey, though I have no idea whither I should go."

Their conversation was interrupted by two mice, who came running as fast as they could, and making for the hole at the foot of the tree, and flinging themselves in head foremost, nearly smothered neighbour cricket and neighbour grasshopper, who got out of their way as best they could, into a little corner. "Ah, madam," exclaimed the biggest mouse, "I have got a pain in my side with running so fast. How fares your highness?" "I have pulled my tail off," replied the younger mouse, "otherwise I must still have remained upon the old sorcerer's table. But did you note how he pursued us? How happy are we to have escaped from his infernal palace!" "I am rather afraid of the cats and the mousetraps, my princess," continued the large mouse; "and I pray fervently that we may soon arrive at the golden branch." "You know the road to it then?" said her mousefied highness. "Know it, madam?—as well as I do

that to my own house," replied the other. "It is a wonderful branch; a single leaf of it is sufficient to make one rich for ever. It supplies you with money, it dispels enchantments, it gives beauty, and preserves youth. We must set out to-morrow before daybreak." "We will have the honour to accompany you, ladies," said the grasshopper, "if you have no objection; I and an honest cricket whom you see here, for we as well as you are pilgrims to the golden branch." A great many compliments immediately passed between them, for the mice were princesses, whom the wicked enchanter had tied to his table, and the high breeding of the cricket and the grasshopper was always apparent whatever might be their situation. They all woke very early. They set out in solemn silence, for they were afraid some sportsman on the look out, hearing them speak, would catch them, and put them into a cage; and in due time they arrived at the golden branch. It was planted in the middle of a wonderful garden. The walks, in lieu of sand, were strewn with small oriental pearls rounder than peas. The roses were crimson-coloured diamonds, and the leaves were emeralds; the blossoms of the pomegranates were garnets; the marigolds were topazes; the jonquils, yellow brilliants; and the violets, sapphires; the bluebells, turquoises; the tulips, amethysts, opals, and diamonds. In short, the number and variety of these beautiful flowers dazzled more than the sun.

Here, then (as I have already told you), was the golden branch, the same that Prince Sans-pair received from the eagle, and with which he touched the fairy Benigne when she was enchanted. It had grown as high as the highest trees around it, and was covered with rubies in the form of cherries. As soon as the cricket, the grasshopper, and the two mice approached it, they recovered their natural forms. What joy, what transports filled the breast of the fond prince, at the sight of his beautiful shepherdess! He flung himself at her feet. He was about to express to her all he felt at so agreeable and unhoped-for a surprise, when Queen Benigne and King Trasimene appeared in matchless pomp, for everything corresponded with the magnificence of the garden. Four cupids, armed cap-à-pie, with bows at their sides, and quivers on their shoulders, supported with their arrows a little canopy of gold and blue brocade, under which were seen two splendid crowns. "Hither, charming lovers!" said the queen, extending her arms towards them; "come, and receive from our hands the crowns which your virtue, your birth, and your constancy deserve. Your toils are about to change for pleasures. Princess Brilliante," continued she, "the shepherd, so alarming to your heart, is the very prince who was destined for you by your father and his own. He did not die in the tower. Receive him as your husband, and leave to me the care of your happiness and tranquillity." The princess, delighted, flung herself into the arms of Benigne, and by the tears which flowed down her cheeks, proved to her that excess of joy had rendered her speechless. Sans-pair knelt before the generous fairy, respectfully kissed her hands, and uttered a thousand unconnected sentences. Trasimene embraced him heartily; and Benigne, in a few words, informed them that she had hardly ever quitted them—that it

was she who had proposed to Brilliante to blow into the white and yellow muff—that she had assumed the form of an old shepherdess in order to take the princess as a lodger —and that it was she also who had directed the prince which way he should go in search of his shepherdess. "It is true," continued she, "that you have undergone sufferings which I would have spared you had it been in my power; but the pleasures of love must be bought at some cost."

At this moment they heard some sweet music which floated around them. The cupids hastened to crown the young lovers; the marriage rites were performed; and during the ceremony, the two princesses, who had recovered their forms, implored the fairy to exert her power to deliver the other unfortunate mice and cats who languished in despair in the enchanter's castle. "I can refuse you nothing on such a day as this," answered the fairy; so saying, she struck the golden branch three times, and all who had been confined in the castle appeared in their natural forms—each lover finding his mistress. The liberal fairy, desirous that nothing should be wanting to the fête, gave the whole contents of the press in the keep to be divided amongst the company. The value of this present was more than that of ten kingdoms in those days. It is easy to imagine their satisfaction and gratitude. Benigne and Trasimene crowned this great work by a generosity which surpassed all that they had hitherto exhibited. They declared that the palace and garden of the golden branch should, for the future, be the property of King Sans-pair and Queen Brilliante. A hundred other sovereigns were their tributaries, and a hundred kingdoms their dependencies.

"When to Brilliante her aid a fairy proffer'd,
She might—and much she needed it just then—
Have chosen the rare beauty to her offer'd;
A tempting bait to nine maids out of ten:
Witness the art, the trouble, and the cost
To gain or keep it, of the sex recorded.
But the temptation on Brilliante was lost;
She preferr'd virtue, and was well rewarded.
The rose and lily on the cheek will die
As quickly as the flowers with which they vie;
But beauties of celestial virtue born,
Are deathless as the soul which they adorn."

# THE BEE AND THE ORANGE TREE

THERE was once upon a time a king and a queen who wanted nothing to make them happy but children. The queen was already aged; she had lost all hopes of having any, when she found herself likely to become a mother, and in due time brought into the world the most beautiful girl that was ever seen. Joy was extreme in the palace; each person was endeavouring to find a name for the princess that would express their feeling towards her. At last they called her Aimée. The queen had engraved upon a turquoise-heart the name of Aimée, daughter of the King of the Happy Island; she tied it round the princess's neck, believing that the turquoise would bring her good fortune. But the rule failed in this case; for one day, when, to amuse the nurse, they took her out to sea in the finest summer weather, all at once there arose so tremendous a tempest that it was impossible to land, and as she was in a little boat, which was only used for pleasure trips close in-shore, it soon went to pieces. The nurse and all the sailors perished. The little princess, who was sleeping in her cradle, remained floating upon the water, and was ultimately thrown by the waves on the coast of a very pretty country, but which was scarcely inhabited since the ogre Ravagio and his wife Tourmentine had come to live there: they ate up everybody. The ogres are terrible people: when once they have tasted fresh meat (it is thus they term human flesh), they will hardly ever eat anything else; and Tourmentine always found out some secret manner of attracting a victim, for she was half a fairy.

A league off she smelt the poor little princess; she ran to the shore in search of her before Ravagio could find her. They were equally greedy, and never were seen such hideous figures, each with one squinting eye in the middle of the forehead, a mouth as large as that of an oven, a nose large and flat, long asses' ears, hair standing on end, and humps behind and before. When Tourmentine, however, saw Aimée in her rich cradle, wrapped in swaddling-clothes of gold brocade, playing with her little hands, her cheeks resembling the white rose mixed with the carnation, and her little vermilion smiling mouth half open, which seemed to smile at the horrid monster who came to devour her, the ogress, touched with pity she had never felt before, resolved to nurse it, and if she did eat it, not to do so directly. She took the child in her arms, tied the cradle on her back, and in this manner she returned to her cave. "Look, Ravagio," said she to her husband, "here is some fresh meat, very plump, very tender; but, by

my head! thou shalt not touch it with teeth—it is a beautiful little girl. I shall bring it up, and we will marry her to our son; they will have some extraordinary little ogres, and that will amuse us in our old age." "Well said," replied Ravagio; "thou art wise, as thou art great. Let me look at the child—it seems wonderfully beautiful!" "Do not eat it!" said Tourmentine, putting the child in his great clutches. "No, no," said he; "I would rather die of hunger." Here, then, were Ravagio, Tourmentine, and the young ogre, caressing Aimée in so tender a manner that it was miraculous.

But the poor child, who only saw these deformed creatures around her, and not her nurse, began to put up her lip, and then she cried lustily; Ravagio's cavern echoed with it. Tourmentine, fearing the noise would frighten her still more, took and carried her into the wood, her children following her. She had six—each one uglier than the other. She was half a fairy, as I have said before; her power consisted in a little ivory wand, which she held in her hand when she wished for anything. She took the wand then, and said, "I wish, in the name of the royal fairy, Trufio, that the most beautiful hind in our forests, gentle and tame, would leave its fawn, and come hither directly, and nurse this little creature that fortune has sent me." Immediately a hind appeared; the little ogres welcomed her kindly; she drew near, and suckled the princess. Tourmentine carried her back to her grotto; the hind ran skipping and gamboling after them, and the child looked at it and fondled it. When she was in her cradle and cried, the hind was always ready to feed her, and the little ogre rocked her.

Thus was the king's daughter brought up, while they deplored her loss night and day; and believing she was drowned, the king thought of choosing an heir. He spoke to the queen upon the subject, who told him to do what he judged proper; that her dear Aimée was dead; that she had no hope of any more children—that he had waited long enough; and that, as fifteen years had elapsed since she had the misery of losing her daughter it would be folly now to expect her return. The king decided upon asking his brother to select amongst his sons the one he thought most worthy to reign, and to send him without delay to him. The ambassadors, having received their credentials and all necessary instruction, departed. It was a great distance off; they were embarked on board some fine vessels. The wind was favourable, and they arrived in a short time at the palace of the king's brother, who was in possession of a large kingdom. He received them very graciously; and when they asked his permission to take back with them one of his sons to succeed their master the king, he wept for joy; and told them that since his brother left the choice to him, he would send him the one he would have taken for himself; which was the second of his sons, whose inclinations were so well suited to the greatness of his birth, that he found him perfect in everything he could wish him to be. They sent for the Prince Aimé (so was he called), and however prejudiced in his favour the ambassadors were previously, they were perfectly astonished when they saw him. He was eighteen years old. Love, the young god of love himself, was less beautiful—but it was a beauty which detracted nothing from

that noble and martial air which inspires respect and affection. He was informed of the anxiety of the king his uncle to have him near him, and of the intention of the king his father to hasten his departure. They prepared his equipage. He took his leave, embarked, and put to sea. Let him sail on ; let fortune guide him !

We will now return to Ravagio, and see what is occupying our young princess. Her beauty increased with her age, and they might well say of her that love, the graces, and all the goddesses combined, never possessed so many charms. It appeared, when she was in the dark cavern with Ravagio, Tourmentine, and the young ogres, that the sun, stars, and skies had descended into it. The cruelty of these monsters had the effect of making her still gentler ; and from the moment she was aware of their terrible inclination for human flesh, she was always endeavouring to save the unfortunate people who fell into their hands, so much so that she often exposed herself to their fury. She would have been sacrificed to it had not the young ogre guarded her like the apple of his eye. Ah ! what will not love do ? This little monster's nature had become softened by seeing and loving this beautiful princess ; but, alas ! what was her grief when she thought she must marry this detestable lover ! Although she knew nothing of her origin, she had rightly guessed from her rich clothes, the gold chain, and the turquoise, that she was of good birth, and she believed so still more from the feelings of her heart. She neither knew how to read nor write, nor any language ; she spoke the jargon of the ogres ; she lived in perfect ignorance of all worldly matters ; she possessed, however, as fine principles of virtue, and as sweet and unaffected manners, as though she had been brought up in the most polished court in the universe. She had made herself a tiger-skin dress, her arms were half naked, she wore a quiver and arrows over her shoulder, and a bow at her side. Her fair hair was fastened only by a platted band of sea-rushes, and floated in the breeze over her neck and shoulders. She also wore buckskins, made of the same rush. In this attire, she walked about the woods like a second Diana ; and she would never have known she was beautiful if the crystal fountains had not been innocent mirrors for her—which she gazed into without their inducing her to be vain, or think more of herself. The sun had a similar effect upon her complexion as upon wax ; it made it whiter, and the sea air could not tan it. She never ate anything but what she took in hunting or fishing, and under this pretext she often absented herself from the horrible cavern, to avoid looking at the most deformed objects in nature. "Heavens !" cried she, shedding tears, "what have I done, that thou hast destined me to be the bride of this cruel little ogre ? Why didst thou not leave me to perish in the sea ? Why didst thou preserve a life, that must be spent in this most deplorable manner ? Hast thou not some compassion for my grief ?" She thus addressed the gods, and implored their aid.

When the weather was rough, and she thought the sea had cast some unfortunate persons on shore, she would carefully go and assist them, and prevent them from approaching the ogres' cavern. It had been blowing fearfully throughout one night:

she arose as soon as it was day, and ran towards the sea. She perceived a man, who, with his arms locked round a plank, was trying to gain the shore, notwithstanding the violence of the waves, which continually repulsed him. The princess was most anxious to help him; she made signs to him, to indicate the easiest landing places; but he neither saw nor heard her. Sometimes he came so close, that it appeared he had but one step to make, when a wave would cover him, and he disappeared. At last he was thrown upon the sand, and lay stretched on it without motion. Aimée drew near him, and, notwithstanding his death-like appearance, she rendered him all the assistance she could. She always carried about her certain herbs, the odour of which was so powerful, it recovered any one from the longest fainting-fit. She pressed them in her hands, and rubbed his lips and temples with some of them. He opened his eyes, and was so astonished at the beauty and the dress of the princess, that he could hardly determine if it were a dream or reality. He spoke first; she spoke in her turn. They could not understand each other, and looked at one another with much attention, mingled with astonishment and pleasure. The princess had only seen some poor fishermen that the ogres had entrapped, and whom she had saved, as I have already said. What must she, then, have thought, when she saw the handsomest and best-made man in the world, most magnificently dressed! It was, in short, the Prince Aimé, her cousin german, whose fleet, driven by a tempest, had gone to pieces on these shoals, and their crews, at the mercy of the winds and waves, had perished, or been cast upon unknown shores. The young prince, for his part, was astonished at seeing so beautiful a creature, in such savage attire, and in so deserted a country; and the remembrance of the princes and ladies he had so recently quitted, only served to convince him that the being he now beheld far surpassed them all. In this mutual astonishment they continued to talk, without being understood by each other; their looks and their actions being the sole interpreters of their thoughts: when, after some moments, the princess suddenly recollecting to what danger this stranger was about to be exposed, the deepest melancholy and dejection became expressed in her countenance. The prince, fearing she was about to faint, evinced great anxiety, and would have taken her hand, but she repulsed him, and endeavoured, as well as she could, to impress upon him that he must go away. She began to run before him; then returned, and made signs to him to do so. He accordingly ran from her, and returned. When he returned, she was angry with him; she took her arrows, and pointed them to her heart, to signify to him that he would be killed. He thought she wished to kill him; he knelt on one knee, and awaited the blow. When she saw that, she knew not what to do, or how to express herself; and, looking at him tenderly, "What," said she, "must thou, then, be the victim of my frightful hosts? Must these very eyes, which now gaze on thee with so much pleasure, see thee torn in pieces, and devoured without mercy?" She wept; and the prince was quite at a loss to comprehend the meaning of her actions. She succeeded, however, in making him understand she did not wish him to follow her. She took him by the hand,

and led him into a cave in a rock, the mouth of which opened towards the sea. It was very deep: she often went there to deplore her misfortunes; sometimes she slept there, when the sun was too powerful to allow her to return to the ogres' cavern; and, as she had great neatness and skill, she had furnished it with hangings of butterflies' wings, of various colours; and upon canes, twisted and passed one within the other, which formed a sort of couch, she had spread a carpet of sea-rushes. She had placed clusters of flowers in large and deep shells, answering the purpose of vases, which she filled with water, to preserve her bouquets. There were a thousand pretty little things she had manufactured, some with fish-bones and shells, and others with the sea-rush and cane; and these articles, notwithstanding their simplicity, were so exquisitely made, it was easy to judge from them of the good taste and ingenuity of the princess. The prince was perfectly surprised at it all, and thought it was in this place that she lived. He was delighted to be there with her; and although he was not happy enough to make her understand the admiration with which she inspired him, it already appeared he preferred seeing and living near her, to all the crowns to which his birth and the will of his relations could call him. She made him sit down; and, to indicate that she wished him to remain till she could procure him something to eat, she unfastened the band from her hair, put it round the prince's arm, and tied him to the couch, and then left him. He was dying to follow her, but was afraid of displeasing her, and became lost in reflections, from which he had been diverted by the presence of the princess. "Where am I?" said he. "Into what country has fortune led me? My vessels are lost, my people are drowned, and I have nothing left. Instead of the crown that was offered me, I find a gloomy rock, in which I seek a shelter. What will become of me here? What sort of people shall I find here? If I am to judge from the person who has assisted me, they are all divinities; but the fear she had that I should follow her—the rude and barbarous language which sounded so badly from her beautiful mouth, induces me to think something still more unfortunate will happen to me than has already occurred." He then applied himself entirely to reviewing in his mind all the incomparable charms of the young savage: his heart was on fire; he became impatient that she did not return, and her absence appeared the greatest of all evils to him. She returned as quickly as she possibly could. She had thought of nothing but the prince; and such tender feelings were so new to her, that she was not on her guard against that with which he was inspiring her. She thanked Heaven for having saved him from the dangers of the sea, and she prayed it to preserve him from the peril he ran in being so near the ogres. She was so excited, and she had walked so rapidly, that when she arrived she felt rather oppressed by the heavy tiger's skin which served as a mantle for her. She sat down; the prince placed himself at her feet, much moved by her sufferings: he certainly was worse than she was. As soon as she recovered from her faintness, she displayed all the little dainties she had brought him; among others, four parrots and six squirrels, cooked by the sun; strawberries, cherries, raspberries, and other fruits.

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She went to the seashore laden with everything of the best.

The plates were of cedar and eagle-wood,[1] the knife of stone, the table-napkins of large leaves of trees, very soft and pliable ; there was a shell to drink out of, and another filled with beautiful water. The prince expressed his gratitude to her by all the signs he could of head and of hands, and she with a sweet smile made him understand that all he did was agreeable to her. But the hour of separation having arrived, she made him so perfectly understand that they must part, that they both began to sigh, and hide their tears from each other. She arose, and would have gone, but the prince uttered a loud cry, and threw himself at her feet, begging her to remain. She saw clearly what he meant, but she repulsed him with a little air of severity ; and he felt he must accustom himself betimes to obey her.

To tell the truth he passed a miserable night. That of the princess was not any better. When she returned to the cavern, and found herself surrounded by the ogres and their children, when she contemplated the frightful little ogre, as the monster that would become her husband, and thought of the charms of the stranger she had just quitted, she felt inclined to throw herself head foremost into the sea ; added to all this was the fear that Ravagio, or Tourmentine, would smell fresh meat, and that they would go straightway to the rock and devour Prince Aimé.

These various fears kept her awake all night ; she arose at daybreak, and went to the seashore ; she ran, she flew there, laden with parrots, monkeys, and a bustard ; fruits, milk, and everything of the best. The prince had not taken off his clothes, he had suffered so much from fatigue at sea, and had slept so little, that towards the morning he had fallen into a doze. "What ! " said she, in awaking him ; " I have thought of you ever since I left you ; I have not even closed my eyes, and you are able to sleep ! " The prince looked at her, and listened without understanding her. In his turn he spoke, " What joy, my darling," said he to her, kissing her hands ; " what joy it is to see you again ! It appears an age since you left this rock." He talked some time to her before he remembered she could not understand him ; when he recollected it, he sighed heavily, and was silent. She then took up the conversation, and told him she was dreadfully alarmed that Ravagio and Tourmentine would discover him ; that she dared not hope he could be in safety in the rock for any length of time ; that if he went away she should die, but that she would sooner consent to that than expose him to be devoured ; that she intreated him to fly. At this point tears filled her eyes ; she clasped her hands before him in the most supplicating manner ; he could not understand at all what she meant, he was in despair, and threw himself at her feet. At last she so frequently pointed out the way to him that he understood some of her signs, and he in his turn explained to her that he would rather die than leave her. She was so touched with this proof of the prince's affection for her, that she took from her arm the chain of gold, with

[1] Canambour, Calambour, Calambuc, Bois d'Aigle, the odoriferous wood of a species of aloe, a native of Mexico and of Cochin-China. It was much used in the manufacture of toys. Madame de Sévigné mentions a rosary of calambuc in her letter of the 9th June, 1680.

the turquoise heart, that the queen, her mother, had hung round her neck, and tied it round his arm in the most gracious manner. Transported as he was by this favour, he failed not to perceive the characters engraved on the turquoise. He examined them attentively, and read, "Aimée, daughter of the King of the Happy Island." No astonishment could equal his; he knew that the little princess who had perished was called Aimée; he had no doubt this heart belonged to her, but he was ignorant if this beautiful savage was the princess, or whether the sea had thrown this trinket on the sands. He looked at Aimée with the most extraordinary attention, and the more he looked at her the more he discovered a certain family expression and features; and from the particular feelings at his heart, he felt convinced that the savage maiden must be his cousin. She was perfectly astonished at his actions, lifting his eyes to heaven in token of thanks, looking at her and weeping, taking her hands and kissing them vehemently; he thanked her for her generosity, and fastening the trinket again on her arm, signified to her he would rather have a lock of her hair, which he begged of her, and which he had much trouble in obtaining. Four days passed thus; the princess carried him every morning the food he required. She remained with him as long as she possibly could, and the hours passed quickly away, although they could not converse together. One evening that she returned rather late, and expected to be scolded by the terrible Tourmentine, she was much surprised at being favourably received; and finding a table covered with fruits, she asked to be allowed to take some. Ravagio told her that they were intended for her; that the young ogre had been gathering them, and that it was now time to make him happy; that three days hence he wished her to marry him. What tidings! Could there be any in the world more dreadful for this amiable princess! She thought she should die of fright and grief; but, concealing her affliction, she replied she would obey them without repugnance, provided they would give her a little longer time. Ravagio became angry, and said, "What should prevent my instantly devouring you?" The poor princess fainted with fear in the claws of Tourmentine, and the young ogre, who loved her dearly, intreated Ravagio so much that he appeased him. Aimée did not sleep an instant; she waited for daylight with impatience. As soon as it appeared, she flew to the rock, and when she saw the prince she uttered sad cries, and shed rivers of tears. He remained almost motionless; his love for the beautiful Aimée had increased in four days, more than a common passion would have done in four years; he was dying to ask her what had happened. She knew he could not understand her, and could think of no mode of explanation. At last she untied her long hair, she put a wreath of flowers on her head, and taking Aimée's hand, she made signs expressing that they intended she was to do so with another. He comprehended the misery that was threatening him, and that they were going to marry her. He felt he should expire at her feet; he knew neither the roads, nor the means of saving her, nor did she. They shed tears together, looked at each other, and mutually signified it would be better to die together than to be separated. She stayed with him till the

evening ; but as night advanced sooner than they expected it, and being deep in thought, she did not attend to the paths she took ; she entered a part of the wood very little frequented, and where a long thorn pierced her foot through and through : happily for her she was not far from the cavern. She had much trouble in reaching it, her foot was all over blood. Ravagio, Tourmentine, and the young ogres, came to her assistance. She suffered great pain when they took out the thorn, they gathered herbs, and applied them to her foot ; and she retired, very uneasy, as may be imagined, about her dear prince. "Alas!" said she, "I shall not be able to walk to-morrow ; what will he think, if he does not see me? I made him understand they intended marrying me ; he will think I have not been able to prevent it ; who will feed him? However he may act, it will be death to him ; if he come to seek me, he is lost ; if I send one of the young ogres to him, Ravagio will know of it." She burst into tears ; she sighed ; and rose early in the morning ; but it was impossible for her to walk ; her wound was too painful ; and Tourmentine, who saw her creeping out, stopped her, and said if she took another step she would eat her.

In the meantime the prince, finding her usual hour for being with him was passed, became distressed and frightened ; the faster the time flew, the more his fears increased ; all the punishments in the world would have appeared less terrible to him than the anxieties to which his love consigned him. He constrained himself to have patience, but the longer he waited the less hope he had. At length he determined to die, and rushed out resolved at all risks to seek his amiable princess. He walked on, he knew not whither ; he followed a beaten path that he saw at the entrance of the wood ; after walking for about an hour, he heard a noise, and perceived the cavern, from whence came a thick smoke ; he expected he should obtain some information there. He entered ; and he had scarcely taken a step when he saw Ravagio, who, instantly seizing him with immense strength, would have devoured him, had not the cries he uttered in defending himself reached the ears of his dear love. At the sound of that voice she felt nothing could stop her ; she rushed out of the hole she slept in, and entered that part of the cavern where Ravagio was holding the poor prince : she was pale and trembling as though it were herself he would have eaten. She threw herself upon her knees before him, and intreated him to keep this fresh meat for the day of her marriage with the young ogre, and she herself would eat him. At these words Ravagio was so satisfied to think the princess would follow their customs, that he let go the prince, and shut him up in the hole where the young ogres slept. Aimée begged to be allowed to feed him, that he might not get thin, and that he might do honour to the nuptial repast. The ogre consented to it ; she took the best of everything to the prince. When he saw her enter his joy diminished his wretchedness, but his grief was renewed when she showed him her wounded foot. They wept together for some time. The prince could not eat, but his dear mistress cut such delicate pieces with her own hands, and presented them to him with so much kindness, that it was impossible to refuse them. She made the young

ogres bring fresh moss, which she covered with birds' feathers, and caused the prince to understand it was for his bed. Tourmentine called her; she could only bid adieu to him by stretching out her hand; he kissed it with transports of affection which cannot be described, and in her eyes he read the expression of her feelings. Ravagio, Tourmentine, and the princess, slept in one of the recesses of the cavern. The young ogre, and five little ogres slept in the other, where the prince was. It is the custom in Ogreland, that the ogre, ogress, and the young ogres, always sleep in their fine gold crowns. This is the only pomp they indulge in; and they would rather be hanged or strangled than forego it. When they were all asleep, the princess, who was thinking of her lover, remembered, that, although Ravagio and Tourmentine had given her their word of honour they would not eat him; if they felt hungry in the night (which was almost always the case when there was fresh meat near them), it would be all over with him; and the anxiety occasioned by this horrid thought, wrought on her to such a degree, she was ready to die with fright. After pondering for some time, she arose, hastily threw on her tiger-skin, and groping her way without making any noise, she entered the cavern where the little ogres were asleep. She took the crown from the head of the first she came to, and put it upon that of the prince, who was wide awake, but did not dare appear to be, not knowing who was performing this ceremony. The princess then returned to her own little bed. She had scarcely crept into it, when Ravagio, dreaming of the good meal he might have made of the prince, and his appetite increasing while he thought of it, arose in his turn, and went into the hole where the little ogres were sleeping. As he could not distinctly see, fearing he should make a mistake, he felt about with his hand, and throwing himself upon the one who had no crown on, crunched him, as he would a chicken. The poor princess, who heard the cracking of the bones of the unfortunate creature he was eating, was faint and dying with fear that it might be her lover; and the prince, for his part, who was much nearer, was a prey to all the terrors consequent on such a situation. Morning relieved the princess of her terrible anxiety; she quickly sought for the prince, and by her signs, made him sufficiently understand her fears, and her impatience to see him safe from the murderous teeth of these monsters. She spoke kindly to him, and he would have uttered a thousand kinder words to her, but for the arrival of the ogress, who came to look at her children. She perceived the cavern filled with blood, and missed her youngest ogre. She uttered horrible shrieks. Ravagio soon found out what he had done—but the evil could not be remedied. He whispered to her, that being hungry, he had chosen the wrong one, for he thought he had eaten the fresh meat.

Tourmentine pretended to be pacified, for Ravagio was cruel, and if she had not taken his apology in good part, he very likely would have devoured her. But alas! how much the beautiful princess suffered from anxiety! She was always thinking by what means she could save the prince; and he could only think of the frightful place this amiable girl was living in. He could not make up his mind to go away so long as she

was there—death would have been preferable to a separation. He made her understand this by repeated signs; she implored him to fly, and save his own life; they shed tears, pressed each other's hands, and in their respective languages vowed to each other reciprocal faith and everlasting love. She could not resist showing him the clothes she had on when Tourmentine found her, and also the cradle she was in. The prince recognised the arms and device of the King of the Happy Island. At this sight he was in raptures; the princess remarked his transports of joy, which led her to believe that he had learned something of importance from the sight of this cradle. She was dying to know what it meant, but how could he make her aware whose daughter she was, and how nearly they were related? All she could make out was, that she had great reason to rejoice. The hour for retiring was come, and they went to their beds as on the preceding night. The princess, a prey to the same misgivings, got up quietly, went into the cavern where the prince was, gently took the crown from one of the little ogres, and put it on her lover's head, who dared not detain her, however desirous he was of doing so. The respect he had for her, and the fear he had of displeasing her, prevented him. The princess could not have done better than putting the crown upon Aimé's head. Without this precaution he would have been lost. The barbarous Tourmentine started up out of her sleep, and thinking of the prince, whom she considered more beautiful than the day, and very tempting food, she was so frightened that Ravagio would eat him by himself, that she thought she would be beforehand with him. She glided, without uttering a word, into the young ogres' cavern; she gently touched those that had crowns on their head (the prince was of the number), and one of the little ogres was gone in three mouthfuls. Aimé and his lady-love heard all, and trembled with fear; but Tourmentine, having accomplished her purpose, now only wanted to go to sleep; so they were safe for the remainder of the night. "Heaven aid us!" cried the princess. "Suggest to me what we can do in such a pressing extremity!" The prince prayed as fervently; sometimes he felt inclined to attack these two monsters, and fight with them; but what hope had he of obtaining any advantage over them? They were as tall as giants, and their skin was proof against pistol-shot; so that he came to the more prudent conclusion that ingenuity could alone extricate them from this frightful position. As soon as it was day, and Tourmentine found the bones of her little ogre, she filled the air with fearful howls. Ravagio appeared in as much despair. They were a hundred times very nearly throwing themselves upon the prince and princess, and devouring them without mercy. They had hidden themselves in a little dark corner, but the cannibals knew full well where they were; and of all the perils they had encountered, this seemed the most imminent. Aimée, racking her brains, all at once remembered that the ivory wand which Tourmentine possessed performed wonders; why, she herself could not tell. "If, notwithstanding her ignorance," said she, "these surprising things occur, why should not my words have as much effect?" Filled with this idea, she ran to the cavern in which Tourmentine slept; she looked for

the wand, that was hidden in a hole; and as soon as she had it in her hand, she said:—"I wish, in the name of the royal fairy, Trufio, to speak the language of him I love!" She would have made many other wishes, but Ravagio entered, the princess held her tongue, and putting back the wand, she very quietly returned to the prince. "Dear stranger," she said, "your troubles affect me much more than my own do!" At these words the prince was struck with astonishment. "I understand you, adorable princess!" said he; "you speak my language, and I hope that you, in your turn, understand that I suffer less for myself than for you; that you are dearer to me than my life, than the light of day, and all that is most beautiful in nature!" "My expressions are more simple," replied the princess, "but they are not the less sincere. I feel I would give everything in the rocky cavern on the seashore—all my sheep and lambs, in short all I possess, for the pleasure of beholding you."

The prince thanked her a thousand times for her kindness, and begged her to tell him who had taught her in so short a time to speak, in so perfect a manner, a language till then unknown. She told him of the power of the enchanted wand, and he informed her of her birth, and their relation to each other. The princess was transported with joy; and as nature had endowed her with extraordinary intellect, she expressed it in such choice and well-turned phrases, that the prince was more in love with her than ever. They had not much time to lose in settling their affairs; it was a question of flight from these irritated monsters, and speedily to seek an asylum for themselves. They promised to love each other for ever; and to unite their destinies, the moment they were able to be married. The princess told her lover, that as soon as she saw Ravagio and Tourmentine were asleep, she would fetch their great camel, and that they would get on it, and go wherever it pleased Heaven to conduct them. The prince was so delighted he could with difficulty contain his joy, and many things, that still alarmed him, were effaced by the charming prospect of the future. The night so long looked for arrived: the princess took some meal, and kneaded it with her white hands, into a cake, in which she put a bean; then, she said, holding the ivory wand, "Oh, bean, little bean! I wish, in the name of the royal fairy, Trufio, that you may speak, if it be necessary, till you are baked." She put this cake in the hot cinders and then went to the prince, who was waiting most impatiently, in the miserable lodging belonging to the young ogres. "Let us go," said she, "the camel is tethered in the wood." "May love and fortune guide us," replied the prince, in a low voice. "Come, come, my Aimée; let us seek a happy and peaceful abode." It was moonlight; she had secured the ivory wand; they found the camel, and went on the road, not knowing whither. In the meantime Tourmentine, who was full of grief, kept turning about without being able to sleep; she put out her arm to feel if the princess was in her bed yet; and not finding her, she cried out in a voice of thunder, "Where art thou, girl?" "I am near the fire," answered the bean. "Wilt thou come to bed?" said Tourmentine; "Directly," replied the bean; "go to sleep, go to sleep." Tourmentine fearing to wake Ravagio, ceased speaking; but in about two hours afterwards,

she again felt in Aimée's little bed, and cried out, "What, thou little jade, thou wilt not come to bed?" "I am warming myself as much as I can," answered the bean. "I wish thou wast in the middle of the fire, for thy pains!" added the ogress. "I am there," said the bean, "and none ever warmed themselves nearer." They still continued talking, for the bean kept up the conversation, like a very clever bean. Towards the morning, Tourmentine again called the princess; but the bean was baked, and did not answer. This silence made her uneasy, she got up very angry; looked about her; called; alarmed everybody; and searched in every direction. No princess! no prince! no little wand! She shrieked so loudly, that the rocks and valleys echoed again. "Wake up, my poppet; awake, dear Ravagio; thy Tourmentine is betrayed. Our fresh meat has run away." Ravagio opened his eye, and bounded into the middle of the cavern like a lion; he roared, he bellowed, he howled, he foamed. "Quick, quick! give me my seven-leagued boots, that I may pursue our fugitives; I will catch them, and swallow them before long." He put on his boots, with which at one stride he went seven leagues. Alas! how was it possible to fly fast enough to escape from such a runner? You may be surprised that with the ivory wand they did not go faster than he did; but the beautiful princess was a novice in fairy art; she knew not all she could do with such a wand; and it was only in extreme cases that a sudden light broke upon her. Delighted at being together, at understanding each other, and by the hope of not being pursued, they travelled on; when the princess, who was the first to perceive the terrible Ravagio, cried out, "Prince, we are lost! Behold that frightful monster, who is coming upon us like a thunderbolt!" "What shall we do?" said the prince, "What will become of us? Ah, if I were alone, I should not care for my life; but yours, my dear mistress, is threatened." "I am hopeless, if the wand will not aid us," added Aimée weeping. "I wish," said she, "in the name of the royal fairy, Trufio, that our camel may become a pond, that the prince may be a boat, and myself an old woman, who is rowing it." Immediately, the pond, the boat, and the old woman were there, and Ravagio arrived at the water's edge. "Hola, ho! old mother," he cried, "have you seen a camel, and a young man and woman, pass by here?" The old woman, who kept her boat in the middle of the pond, put her spectacles on her nose, and looking at Ravagio, made signs to him, that she had seen them, and that they had passed through the meadow. The ogre believed her; he went to the left. The princess wished to take her natural form; she touched herself with the wand three times, and struck the boat and the pond. She and the prince became young and beautiful again. They quickly mounted the camel, and turned to the right, that they might not meet their enemy.

While proceeding rapidly, and hoping to find some one who could tell them the road to the Happy Island, they lived upon the wild fruit of the country, they drank water from the fountains, and slept beneath the trees, not without fear that the wild beasts would come and devour them. But the princess had her bow and arrows, with which she would have tried to defend herself. The danger was not so terrible to them as to

prevent their feeling the liveliest pleasure in being released from the cavern, and finding themselves together. Since they had been able to understand, they had said the prettiest things in the world to each other. Love generally quickens the wit; but, in their case, they needed no such assistance, possessing naturally a thousand agreeable accomplishments, and an imagination ever suggesting new and original ideas.

The prince testified to the princess his extreme impatience to arrive speedily either at his or her royal father's court as she had promised, that with the consent of their parents she would accept him as her husband. What you will have some difficulty perhaps in believing is, that while waiting for this happy day, and being with her in forests and solitudes, where he was at full liberty to make to her any proposals he pleased, he conducted himself in so respectful and prudent a manner that never in the world has there been known to exist so much love and virtue together.

After Ravagio had scoured the mountains, forests, and plains he returned to his cavern, where Tourmentine and the young ogres impatiently awaited him. He was laden with five or six people who had unfortunately fallen into his clutches. "Well," said Tourmentine, "hast thou found and eaten those runaways, those thieves, that fresh meat? Hast thou not saved for me either a hand or a foot of them?" "I believe they must have flown away," replied Ravagio; "I ran like a wolf in all directions without meeting with them. I only saw an old woman in a boat upon a pond, who gave me some tidings of them." "What did she tell thee, then?" impatiently inquired Tourmentine. "That they had gone to the left," replied Ravagio. "By my head, thou hast been deceived," said she: "I suspect it was to them thou didst speak. Go back; and if thou findest them, give them not a moment's grace!" Ravagio greased his seven-leagued boots, and set out again like a madman. Our young lovers were issuing from a wood, in which they had passed the night. When they saw the ogre they were both greatly alarmed. "My Aimée," said the prince, "here is our enemy; I feel I have courage enough to fight with him; have you not sufficient to escape by yourself?" "No," cried she, "I will never forsake you—unkind one: do you thus doubt my love for you? But let us not lose a moment; perhaps the wand may be of great service to us. I wish," cried she, "in the name of the royal fairy, Trufio, that the prince should be changed into a picture, the camel into a pillar, and myself into a dwarf." The change was made; and the dwarf began to blow a horn. Ravagio, who approached with rapid strides, said, "Tell me, you little abortion of nature, if you have not seen a fine young man, a young girl, and a camel pass by here?" "Ah, I will tell you," replied the dwarf; "I know that you are in quest of a gentle damoiseau,[1] a marvellously fair dame, and the beast they rode on. I espied them here yesterday at this, disporting themselves happily and joyously. The gentle damoiseau received the

[1] A young gentleman before he was knighted. All the anwsers of the dwarf in the original are written in the language of the middle ages, and evince Madame d'Aulnoy's study of the romans and fabliaux of the 13th and 14th centuries.

praise and guerdon of the jousts and tournaments, which were held in honour of Merlusine, of whom you here behold the lovely resemblance. Many high-born gentlemen and good knights broke their lances here, on hauberks, helmets, and shields; the conflict was rough, and the guerdon, a most beautiful clasp of gold, richly beset with pearls and diamonds. On their departure, the unknown dame said to me, 'Dwarf, my friend, without longer parley, I crave a boon of thee, in the name of thy fairest lady-love.' 'It will not be denied,' said I to her; 'and I grant it to you, on the sole condition that it is in my power.' 'In case then,' said she, 'that thou shouldst espy the great and extraordinary giant, whose eye is in the middle of his forehead, pray him most courteously that he go his way in peace and leave us alone;' and, therewith, she whipped her palfrey, and they departed." "Which way!" said Ravagio. "By that verdant meadow, on the skirts of the wood," said the dwarf. "If thou liest," replied the ogre, "be assured, thou filthy little reptile, that I will eat thee, thy pillar, and thy portrait of Merluche."[1] "There is no villainy or falsehood in me," said the dwarf: "my mouth is no lying one; living man cannot convict me of fraud. But go quickly, if you would kill them before the sun sets." The ogre strode away. The dwarf resumed her own figure, and touched the portrait and the pillar, which also became themselves again. What joy for the lover and his mistress! "Never," said the prince, "did I suffer such keen anxiety, my dear Aimée! As my love for you increases every moment, so are my fears augmented when you are in peril." "And I," said she, "seemed to have no fear; for Ravagio never eats pictures, and I was alone exposed to his fury. There was also little in my appearance that was palatable; and, in short, I risked my life to preserve yours."

Ravagio hunted in vain; he could neither find the lover nor his mistress. He was as tired as a dog; he retraced his steps to the cavern. "What! hast thou returned without our prisoners?" exclaimed Tourmentine, tearing her bristling hair. "Don't come near me, or I shall strangle thee!" "I saw nothing," said he, "but a dwarf, a pillar, and a picture." "By my head," continued she, "it was them! I was very foolish to leave my vengeance in thy hands, as though I were too little to undertake it myself. Here! here I go! I will put on the boots this time, and I shall not speed worse than thou." She put on the seven-leagued boots, and started. What chance have the prince and princess of travelling so quickly as to escape these monsters, with their accursed seven-leagued boots! They saw Tourmentine coming, dressed in a serpent's skin, the variegated colours of which were wonderful. She carried upon her shoulder a mace of iron, of a terrible weight; and as she looked carefully on all sides, she must have seen the prince and princess, had they not been at that moment in the thickest part of a wood. "The matter is hopeless," said Aimée, weeping; "here comes the cruel Tourmentine, whose sight chills my blood: she is more cunning than Ravagio. If either of us speak

[1] An intentional contemptuous alteration of the name of Merlusine into that for a stock-fish.

to her, she will know us, and eat us up without more ado. Our trial will be soon over, as you may imagine." "Love, love, do not abandon us!" exclaimed the prince. "Hast thou within thy empire fonder hearts or purer flames than ours? Ah, my dear Aimée," continued he, taking her hands and kissing them fervently, "canst thou be destined to perish in so barbarous a manner?" "No," said she, "no; I have a certain feeling of courage and firmness that reassures me. Come, little wand, do thy duty. I wish, in the name of the royal fairy, Trufio, that the camel should be a tub, that my dear prince should become a beautiful orange-tree, and that I, metamorphosed into a bee, should hover around him." As usual, she struck three blows for each; and the change took place so suddenly, that Tourmentine, who had arrived on the spot, did not perceive it. The horrible fury was out of breath, and sat down under the orange-tree. The princess bee delighted in stinging her in a thousand places: and although her skin was so hard, the sting pierced it, and made her cry out. To see her roll and lay about her upon the grass one would have thought her a bull, or a young lion, tormented by a swarm of insects; for this one was worth a hundred. The prince orange-tree was dying with fear that she would be caught and killed. At last, Tourmentine, covered with blood, made off; and the princess was about to resume her own form, when, unluckily, some travellers passing through the wood, having perceived the ivory wand, which was a very pretty-looking thing, picked it up and carried it away. Nothing could be much more unfortunate than this. The prince and princess had not lost their speech, but of how little use was it to them in their present condition! The prince, overwhelmed with grief, uttered lamentations that greatly added to his dear Aimée's distress. He would sometimes thus express himself:—

"The moment was near, when my lovely princess
Had promised my wishes to crown.
A hope so enchanting—of joy, such excess,
Defied of misfortune the frown!
O Love, who such wonders can work at thy will;
Who ruleth the world with thy dart;
Preserve my dear bee from each peril, and still
Unchanged to the last keep her heart."

"How wretched am I," continued he, "thus pent up within the bark of a tree. Here I am, an orange-tree, without any power to move. What will become of me, if you abandon me, my dear little bee? But," added he, "why will you go so far from me? You will find a most agreeable dew on my flowers, and drops in them sweeter than honey: you will be able to live on it. My leaves invite you to couch in them; there you will have nothing to fear from the malice of spiders!" As soon as the orange-tree ceased its complaints, the bee replied to him thus:—

"Fear not, prince, that I should range;
Nought my faithful heart can change;
Let the only thought of thine,
Be that thou hast conquer'd mine."

She added to that, "Do not fear that I will ever leave you. Neither the lilies, nor the

jasmines, nor the roses, nor all the flowers of the most beautiful gardens, would induce me to commit so much infidelity. You shall see me continually flying around you, and you will know that the orange-tree is not less dear to the bee than Prince Aimé was to the Princess Aimée. In short, she shut herself up in one of the largest flowers, as in a palace; and true love, which is never without its consolations, found some even in this union.

The wood in which the orange-tree was situated was the favourite promenade of a princess who lived hard by in a magnificent palace. She was young, beautiful, and witty: they called her Linda. She would not marry because she feared she should not be always loved by the person she might choose for a husband; and as she was very wealthy, she built a sumptuous castle, and received there only ladies, and old men (more philosophers than gallants), permitting no young cavalier to approach it. The heat of the day having detained her a longer time than she wished in her apartments, she went out in the evening with all her ladies, and came to walk in the wood. The perfume from the orange-tree surprised her; she had never seen one, and she was charmed to have found it. She could not understand by what chance she had met with it in such a place. It was soon surrounded by all the company. Linda forbade any one to pick a single flower, and they carried the tree into her garden, whither the faithful bee followed it. Linda, enchanted with its delicious odour, seated herself beneath it. Before returning to the palace, she was about to gather a few of the blossoms, when the vigilant bee sallied out humming under the leaves, where she remained as sentinel, and stung the princess so severely, that she very nearly fainted. There was an end of depriving the orange-tree of its blossoms; Linda returned to her palace, quite ill. When the prince was at liberty to speak to Aimée, "What made you so vexed with young Linda, my dear bee?" said he to her; "you have stung her cruelly." "Can you ask me such a question?" replied she. "Have you not sufficient delicacy to understand that you ought not to have any sweets but for me; that all that is yours belongs to me, and that I defend my property when I defend your blossoms?" "But," said he, "you see them fall without being distressed: would it not be the same to you if the princess adorned herself with them—if she placed them in her hair, or put them in her bosom?" "No," said the bee, in a sharp tone, "it is not at all the same thing to me. I know, ungrateful one, that you feel more for her than you do for me. There is also a great difference between an accomplished person, richly dressed, and of considerable rank in these parts, and an unfortunate princess, whom you found covered with a tiger's skin, surrounded by monsters who could only give her coarse and barbarous ideas, and whose beauty is not great enough to enslave you." And then she cried, as much as any bee is able to cry. Some of the flowers of the enamoured orange-tree were wetted by her tears, and his distress at having vexed his princess was so great that all his leaves turned yellow, several branches withered, and he thought he should die. "What have I done, then," exclaimed he, "my beautiful bee? What have I done to

make you so angry? Ah! doubtless, you will abandon me. You are already weary of being linked to one so unfortunate as I am." The night was passed in reproaches, but at the break of day a kind zephyr, who had been listening to them, induced them to be reconciled; it could not render them a greater service. In the meantime, Linda, who was dying to have a bouquet of orange-flowers, arose early in the morning, descended to her flower-garden, and flew to gather one. But when she put forth her hand, she felt herself so violently stung by the jealous bee, that her heart failed her. She returned to her room in a very bad temper. "I cannot make out," said she, "what this tree is that we have found; for whenever I wish to take the smallest bud, some insects that guard it pierce me with their stings." One of her maids, who had some wit, and was very lively, said laughingly, "I would advise you, madam, to arm yourself as an Amazon, and follow Jason's example, when he went to win the golden fleece, and courageously take the most beautiful flowers from this pretty tree." Linda thought there was something amusing in this idea, and immediately she ordered them to make her a helmet covered with feathers, a light cuirass, and gauntlets; and to the sound of trumpets, kettle-drums, fifes, and hautboys, she entered the garden, followed by all her ladies, who were armed like herself, and who called this fête "the Battle of the Bees and Amazons." Linda drew her sword very gracefully; then, striking the most beautiful branch of the orange-tree, said: "Appear, terrible bees, appear! I come to defy you! Are you sufficiently valiant to defend that which you love?" But what became of Linda, and all who accompanied her, when they heard a pitiful "Alas!" issue from the stem of the orange-tree, and saw that blood flowed from the severed branch! "Heavens!" cried she, "what have I done? What prodigy is this?" She took the bleeding branch, and vainly attempted to rejoin the portions: she was seized with alarm and an overpowering anxiety.

The poor little bee, in despair at the sad accident that had happened to her dear orange-tree, was about to rush out to find death at the point of the fatal sword, in her attempt to avenge her dear prince; but she preferred living for him, and recollecting a remedy that he needed, she intreated him to let her fly to Arabia that she might bring back some balm for him. After he had consented to her going there, and they had taken a tender and affectionate farewell of each other, she started for that part of the world, with instinct alone for her guide. But to speak more correctly, love carried her there; and as he flies faster than the swiftest of winged beings, he enabled her rapidly to perform this long journey. She brought back the wonderful balm upon her wings, and about her little feet, with which she cured her prince. It is true, it was not so much by the excellence of the balm, as by the pleasure it afforded him, in seeing the princess bee take so much care of his wound. She applied the balm every day, and he had much need of it; for the severed branch was one of his fingers; so, had Linda's treatment continued, he would neither have had legs nor arms. Oh, how acutely did the bee feel for the sufferings of the orange-tree! She reproached herself with being the cause, by the

impetuosity with which she defended its flowers. Linda, alarmed at what she had done, could neither sleep nor eat. At last she resolved to send for some fairies, in the hope of being enlightened upon a matter that seemed so extraordinary. She despatched ambassadors, laden with handsome presents, to invite them to her court.

Queen Trufio was one of the first who arrived at Linda's palace. There never was a person so skilful in fairy art. She examined the branch and the orange-tree, she smelt its flowers, and distinguished a human odour, which surprised her. She did not leave a spell untried, and employed some so powerful, that all at once the orange-tree disappeared, and they perceived the prince, handsomer and better made than any other man in the world. At this sight Linda became immovable; she was struck with admiration, and so peculiar a feeling for him, that she had already lost her former indifference, while the young prince, thinking of his charming bee, threw himself at Trufio's feet. "Great queen," said he, "I am infinitely indebted to thee; thou hast given me new life, by restoring me to my original form; but, if thou wouldst that I should owe thee my peace and happiness—a blessing even greater than the life thou hast recalled me to—restore me my princess!" In uttering these words he took hold of the little bee, whom he never ceased gazing upon. "Thou shalt be satisfied," answered the generous Trufio. She recommenced her ceremonies, and the Princess Aimée appeared with so many charms that there was not one of the ladies who was not envious of her. Linda hesitated within herself, whether she ought to be pleased or vexed at so extraordinary an adventure; and, particularly, at the metamorphose of the bee.

At length her reason got the better of her passion, which was only in its infancy; she embraced Aimée a thousand times, and Trufio begged her to relate her adventures. She was under too much obligation to her to refuse what she wished. The graceful and easy manner with which she spoke interested the whole assembly; and when she told Trufio she had performed so many wonders by virtue of her name and her wand, there was an exclamation of joy throughout the hall, and every one intreated the fairy to complete this great work. Trufio, on her side, felt extreme pleasure at all she had heard. She folded the princess in her arms.

"Since I was so useful to you, without knowing you," said she to her, "judge, charming Aimée, now that I do know you, how much I am inclined to serve you. I am a friend of the king your father, and of the queen your mother: let us instantly go, in my flying chariot, to the Happy Island, where both of you will be received as you deserve." Linda begged them to remain one day with her, during which she made them very costly presents, and the Princess Aimée left off her tiger's skin for dresses of incomparable beauty. Let all now imagine the joy of our happy lovers. Yes, let them imagine it, if they can; but to do that, they should have met with the same misfortunes, have been amongst ogres, and undergone as many transformations. They set out at last; Trufio conducted them through the air to the Happy Island. They were received by the king and queen as the last persons in the world they had ever expected to see again, but whom

they beheld with the greatest pleasure. Aimée's beauty and prudence, added to her wit, made her the admiration of the age. Her dear mother loved her passionately. The fine qualities of Prince Aimé's mind were not less appreciated than his handsome person. The nuptials were celebrated; nothing was ever so magnificent. The graces attended in their festive attire. The loves were there, without even being invited, and by their express order, the eldest son of the prince and princess was named Faithful Love. They have given him since then many other titles; and under all these various names it is very difficult to find Faithful Love, such as sprang from this charming marriage. Happy they who meet with him unmistakably.

"Aimée with her lover alone in a wood
Conducted herself with extreme circumspection;
To reason she listen'd—temptation withstood,
And lost not a jot of her prince's affection.
Believe not, ye fair, who would captivate hearts,
That Cupid needs pleasure alone to retain him;
Love oft from the lap of indulgence departs,
But prudence and virtue for ever enchain him."

# THE GOOD LITTLE MOUSE

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen, who loved each other so much—so much that they made each other's sole happiness. Their hearts and their sentiments were always in unison. Each day they hunted the hare or the stag, or went fishing for soles and carp, or to the ball to dance the bourée or the pavan,[1] and to great banquets to eat roast meats and sugar-plums, to the play and to the opera. They laughed, they sang, they played a thousand tricks to amuse themselves—in short, it was the happiest of times. Their subjects followed the example of the king and queen; they emulated each other in their pastimes. For all these reasons they called this kingdom the Land of Joy. It happened that a king who was the neighbour of King Joyeux lived very differently. He was a declared enemy to pleasure. He desired nothing but wounds and blows. He had a grim countenance, a large beard, hollow eyes; he was all skin and bones, always dressed in black, with hair which stood on end, very greasy and dirty. To please him, they knocked down and killed all travellers. He hanged all criminals himself, and delighted in torturing them. When a mother was dotingly fond of her little girl or boy, he would send for her, and before her eyes would break the child's arms, or wring its neck. This kingdom was called the Land of Tears.

The wicked king heard of the happiness of King Joyeux; he was very envious of him, and resolved to raise a large army, and kill, wound, or take captive him and all his people. He sent in all directions for men and arms: he ordered cannon to be cast. Everybody trembled with fear. They said, "With whom is he going to war? He will give him no quarter." When everything was ready, he marched towards the country of King Joyeux, who at this bad news speedily took measures for his defence. The queen was frightened to death, and crying said, "Sire, we must fly. Let us collect as much money as we can, and go to the other end of the world." The king replied, "Fie, madam, I have too much courage for that. It is better to die than be branded as a coward." He assembled all his men-at-arms, took an affectionate farewell of his wife,

[1] The bourée, or borée, is the national dance of Auvergne. Madame de Sévigné, in her letters from Vichy, in 1676, repeatedly eulogises its grace and spirit; and Wraxall, in his "Tour in France," 1775, speaking of a fair countess, says, "When she danced the bourée, a dance peculiar to Auvergne, I thought Hortensia Mancini was not comparable to Madame de L——." The pavan was a slow and stately dance, taking its name from the peacock, because it was danced by princes in their mantles, and ladies in gowns with long trains. Hawkins tells us the air was invented at Padua.

mounted his beautiful horse, and departed. When she lost sight of him, she began to weep sadly, and clasping her hands together, said, "Alas! if I should have an infant, and the king should be killed in battle, I shall be a widow and a prisoner, and the wicked king will inflict a thousand cruelties upon me." This thought prevented her from eating and sleeping. She wrote to him every day; but one morning, looking from the battlements, she saw a courier coming at full speed. She called to him, "Ho, courier, ho! What news?" "The king is dead," said he; "the battle is lost; the wicked king will be here immediately." The poor queen swooned, and they carried her to bed. All her ladies were around her, crying, one for her father, another for her son, and tearing their hair: it was the most distressing thing in the world. All on a sudden they heard cries of "Murder! Thieves!" It was the wicked king, who had arrived with all his wretched followers, killing every one they met with. He entered the royal palace in complete armour, and ascended to the queen's chamber. When she saw him enter, she was so frightened that she hid herself in the bed, and pulled the counterpane over her head. He called to her two or three times, but she never spoke a word. He grew angry, and said very fiercely, "Dost thou make sport of me? Dost know that I might strangle thee instantly?" He pulled the bed-clothes off her, and tore off her cap: her beautiful hair fell all about her shoulders; he twisted it three times round his hand, and threw her over his shoulders like a sack of corn; he carried her thus down stairs, and mounted with her upon his large black horse. She intreated him to have mercy on her, but he only mocked her and said, "Cry and complain! it makes me laugh, and amuses me." He carried her into his own country, and vowed all the way that he would hang her, but he was told it would be a pity, as she was about to become a mother. When he discovered that, it occurred to him that if she had a daughter, he would marry his son to her, and to ascertain which it would be, he sent for a fairy who lived near to his dominions. When she arrived, he entertained her better than was his custom; he then took her up into a tower, at the top of which the poor queen occupied a very small and ill-furnished room. She was lying on the ground, upon a mattress not worth twopence, and where she cried day and night. When the fairy saw her, she could not help pitying her; she courtesied to her, and, embracing her, said in a low voice, "Take courage, madam, your misfortunes will not last for ever. I hope to hasten the term of them." The queen, consoled a little by these words, returned the fairy's embraces, and begged her to have pity upon a poor princess who had enjoyed the greatest happiness, and was now equally miserable. They were in close conversation, when the wicked king exclaimed, "Come! no more compliments. I brought you here to tell me if this slave will have a boy or a girl?" The fairy said, "She will have a girl, who will be the handsomest and best informed princess that was ever seen;" and forthwith she endowed the unborn princess with innumerable virtues and honours.

"Should she not be handsome and well informed," said the wicked king, "I will hang her to her mother's neck, and her mother on a tree, and nothing shall prevent me."

So saying he left the room with the fairy, not condescending to look at the good queen, who was crying bitterly, for said she to herself, "Alas! what shall I do? Should I have a beautiful little girl, he will give her to his monkey of a son; and should she be ugly, he will hang us together. To what an extremity am I reduced? Could I not hide my infant somewhere, so that he should never see it?" The time drew near for the little princess to be brought into the world, and the queen's anxieties increased—she had no one to complain to, or to console her. The jailor who had the care of her gave her each morning but three boiled peas, with a little piece of black bread. She became as thin as a herring—she was nothing but skin and bone. One evening, as she was spinning (for the wicked king, who was very avaricious, made her work night and day), she saw a very pretty little mouse come in through a hole. She said to it, "Alas! my little darling, what dost thou come to seek here? I have only three peas for myself the whole day long; if thou wouldst not fast, thou hadst better depart." The little mouse ran hither and thither, and danced and capered like a little monkey, and the queen was so amused at it that she gave it the only pea that she had left for her supper. "Here, little darling," said she, "eat this; I have nothing more, and I give it you willingly." As soon as she had done so, she saw upon the table an excellent partridge, wonderfully well roasted, and two jars of sweetmeats. "Truly," said she, "a good deed is never unrewarded." She ate a little, but she had lost her appetite through fasting. She threw some bon-bons to the mouse, who was still nibbling, and then she began to skip about more than before supper. Early the next morning the jailor brought the queen the three peas, which he had put into a large dish out of mockery. The little mouse came softly and ate them all three and the bread also. When the queen wanted her dinner, she could not find anything. She was very angry with the mouse. "It is a wicked little animal," said she. "If it continues to do this I shall be starved." As she was about to put the cover on the empty dish she saw it fill with all sorts of good things to eat: she was delighted, and began to dine on them, but whilst eating she bethought herself that the wicked king would perhaps in a few days order her baby to be killed, and she left the table weeping, and raising her eyes to heaven exclaimed, "Ah! are there no means of saving my child?" As she uttered these words she saw the little mouse playing with some long bits of straw; she took them up and set to work upon them. "If there is enough straw," said she, "I will make a covered basket to put my little girl in, and I will give her out of the window to the first charitable person who will take care of her." She then worked on with renewed spirit. There was plenty of straw, the mouse always dragging some into the room, where she continued to skip about, and at meal-time the queen gave it her three peas, and, in exchange, always found a hundred sorts of ragouts. She was much surprised, and was continually wondering who it could be that sent her such excellent things. The queen, one day, was looking out of the window to ascertain how long the cord should be by which she intended letting the basket down. She perceived below a little old woman, who was leaning on a stick, and

who said to her, "I know your trouble, madam; if you like, I will serve you." "Alas! my dear friend," said the queen, "I should be very much obliged to you. Come every evening to the foot of this tower. As soon as my child is born I will let it down to you; you will nurse it, and if I am ever rich I will handsomely reward you." "I am not covetous," answered the old woman, "but I am dainty in my eating; there is nothing I like so much as a plump and fat mouse. If you find any in your garret kill them, and throw them to me. I shall not be ungrateful for it, and your baby shall be well taken care of." The queen, hearing this, began to weep without making any reply, and the old woman, after having waited a little, asked her why she cried. "It is," she said, "because there is but one mouse that comes into my chamber, which is so pretty—such a very pretty little creature—that I cannot make up my mind to kill it." "How!" replied the old woman angrily, "you love a knavish little mouse that gnaws everything, better than the child you are about to have! Very well, madam, then you are not to be pitied; remain in such good company; I shall have plenty of mice without yours; I care little about it;" and she went away grumbling and muttering. Although the queen had a good meal set before her, and the mouse came to dance to her as usual, she never raised her eyes from the ground on which she fixed them—the tears streaming down her cheeks. That same night she was confined of a princess, who was wonderfully beautiful; instead of crying, as other children do, she laughed at her dear mamma, and held out her little hands towards her, as though she was quite sensible. The queen fondled and kissed her most tenderly, sadly thinking, "Poor little darling! dear child! if thou fallest into the wicked king's hands, thy life will be ended." She covered her up in the basket with a note tied to her dress, upon which was written, "The name of this unfortunate infant is Joliette." And when she had left her a few moments without looking at her, she again opened the basket, and found her still handsomer; she kissed her and wept more bitterly, not knowing what to do. But with this comes the little mouse and gets into the basket. "Oh! thou little creature," said the queen, "how dearly has thy preservation cost me! I may, perhaps, lose on thy account my dear Joliette; any one else would have killed thee, and given thee to the dainty old woman, but I could not consent to do that." The mouse began to say, "Do not repent of having done so, madam; I am not so unworthy of your friendship as you think." The queen was frightened to death when she heard the mouse speaking; but her fear increased greatly when she perceived its little muzzle begin to take the form of a human face, that its paws became hands and feet, and that it suddenly grew larger. At length the queen, hardly daring to look at her, recognised her to be the same fairy who came to see her with the wicked king, and who was so kind to her. The fairy said to her, "I wished to try your heart; I have discovered it to be good, and that you are susceptible of friendship. We fairies, who possess immense wealth and treasures, seek only for friendship to sweeten life, and we rarely find it." "Is it possible, beautiful lady," said the queen, embracing her, "that you have any trouble in finding friends, being so rich and powerful?" "Yes,"

replied she, "for they only love us from self-interest, and that affects us but little; but when you loved me as a little mouse, it was not from an interested motive. I wished to prove you still further; I took the form of an old woman; it was I who spoke to you at the foot of the tower, and you were still faithful to me." At these words she embraced the queen, then she kissed the vermilion mouth of the little princess, and said to her, "I endow thee, my child, to be the consolation of thy mother, and to be richer than thy father; to live a hundred years, always beautiful, without sickness, without wrinkles, and without becoming an old woman." The queen, enchanted, thanked her, and intreated her to carry Joliette away with her, and to take care of her, adding that she gave her to her to be her own daughter. The fairy accepted her, and thanked her; she put the baby in the basket, and lowered it to the ground; but having stopped a little, to reassume the form of the little mouse, when she descended the cord after her, the child was not there, and reascending, much frightened, "All is lost!" said she to the queen; "my enemy, Cancaline, has carried off the princess. You must know she is a cruel fairy who hates me; and, unfortunately, being my senior, she is more powerful than I am. I know not by what means I can recover Joliette from her horrid clutches."

When the queen heard such sad news, she thought she should die of grief; she cried very much, and begged her kind friend to try and see the child again, at any price. In the meanwhile the jailor came into the queen's apartment, and found she had been brought to bed. He flew to tell the king of it, who ran to ask for the child; but she said that a fairy whose name she did not know had appeared and taken it away by force. The wicked king stamped his foot, and bit his nails to the quick. "I promised to hang thee," said he; "I will keep my word instantly." He then dragged the poor queen into a wood, climbed up a tree, and was going to hang her, when the fairy, having rendered herself invisible, gave him a violent push, and he fell from the top of the tree, knocking out four of his teeth. Whilst his people were endeavouring to put them in again, the fairy carried the queen away in her flying chariot, and conducted her to a beautiful castle. She took great care of her, and if she had had the Princess Joliette with her she would have been perfectly happy; but they could not find out where Cancaline had placed her, although the little mouse tried all she possibly could. Time passed on, and the queen's extreme affliction was a little abated. Fifteen years had flown away when it was reported that the wicked king's son had determined to marry his turkey-keeper, notwithstanding the young girl objected to the match. It was very surprising that a turkey-keeper should refuse to become a queen; however, the wedding-dresses were made, and it was to be so splendid a marriage that they came from a hundred miles about to see it. The little mouse transported herself thither; she wished to see the turkey-keeper at her ease. She went into the poultry-yard, and found her dressed in coarse linen, with naked feet, and a greasy napkin round her head. There were dresses of gold and silver; diamonds, pearls, ribbons, and lace, all about her on the ground; the turkeys were trampling on them, dirtying them, and spoiling them. The girl was sitting upon a large stone; the wicked king's

son, who was crooked, blind with one eye, and lame, was saying to her roughly "If you refuse me your heart, I will kill you." She answered him proudly, "I will not marry you, you are too ugly; you resemble your cruel father; leave me in peace with my little turkeys—I love them better than all your fine clothes." The little mouse looked at her with admiration; for she was as beautiful as the sun. As soon as the wicked king's son was gone, the fairy assumed the figure of an old shepherdess, and said to her, "Good morning, my darling; your turkeys look very fine ones." The young turkey-keeper looked at the old woman sweetly, and replied, "They want me to leave them for a paltry crown—what would you advise me to do?" "My little girl," said the fairy, "a crown is very beautiful; you know neither the value nor the weight of it." "But I do know," promptly replied the turkey-keeper, "and, therefore, refuse to accept it; at the same time I know not who I am, nor where my father and mother are. I have neither friends nor relations." "You are beautiful and virtuous, my child," said the wise fairy, "which is worth ten kingdoms. Tell me, I intreat you, who placed you here, since you have neither father nor mother, friends nor relations?" "A fairy named Cancaline is the cause of my being here: she beat me, and knocked me about without cause or reason. I ran away one day, and not knowing where to go, I sat down in a wood. The son of the wicked king came to walk there; he asked me if I would attend to his poultry-yard. I was very willing to do so. I had the care of the turkeys; he frequently came to see them, and he saw me also. Alas! without any wish on my part, he took it in his head to love me so much, that he worries me greatly."

The fairy, after hearing this story, began to think that the turkey-keeper was the Princess Joliette; she said to her, "My child, tell me your name?" "I call myself Joliette, at your service," said she. At this name, the fairy no longer doubted about it, and throwing her arms round her neck, she thought she should devour her with kisses. She then said to her, "Joliette, I have known you for some time past; I am delighted to find you are so discreet, and so well-informed; but I wish you were cleaner, for you look like a little scullion. Take the beautiful clothes that are here, and dress yourself in them." Joliette, who was very obedient, threw off, immediately, the greasy handkerchief from her head, and shaking it slightly, she was covered entirely by her hair, which was as fair as light, and as fine as golden thread; it fell in ringlets down to the ground: then, taking in her delicate hands some water from a fountain, which was in the poultry-yard, she washed her face, which became as clear as oriental pearl. Roses seemed to be blooming upon her cheeks and lips; her breath smelt of garden and wild thyme; her form was as straight as a rush. In winter time they might have taken her skin for the snow, and in summer for the lily.

When she was dressed in her diamonds and fine clothes, the fairy considered her a miracle; she said to her, "Who do you think you are, my dear Joliette, now you are so bravely dressed?" She replied, "Truly, it seems to me that I am the daughter of a great king." "Should you be glad of it?" said the fairy. "Yes, my good mother,"

replied Joliette, courtesying to her; "I should be very glad." "Well," said the fairy, "then be content: I will tell you more to-morrow." She quickly returned to her splendid castle, where the queen was busy spinning silk; the little mouse cried out to her, "Will your majesty bet your distaff and spindle that I do not bring you the best news you have ever had?" "Alas!" replied the queen, "since the death of King Joyeux, and the loss of my Joliette, I would not give a pin for all the news in the world." "There, there! do not grieve yourself any more," said the fairy, "the princess is wonderfully well; I have just seen her; she is so beautiful, so very beautiful, that it only depends upon herself to be a queen." She related everything from beginning to end, and the queen cried with joy to know her daughter was so beautiful, and with grief that she had been a turkey-keeper.

"When we were great sovereigns in our own kingdom," said she, "and lived in such splendour, the poor dear departed and myself never thought our child would be a turkey-keeper!" "It is the cruel Cancaline," added the fairy, "who, knowing how I love you, to spite me has put her in this situation; but she shall not be in it any longer, or I will burn my books." "I will not agree," said the queen, "to her marrying the son of the wicked king. Let us go to-morrow to claim her, and bring her here." In the meantime, the wicked king's son, being extremely angry with Joliette, sat down under a tree, where he gave way so to his grief that he quite howled. His father heard him; he went to the window and called out to him, "What art thou crying about, making a fool of thyself?" He answered, "Our turkey-keeper will not love me." "How! she will not love thee?" said the wicked king, "I will make her love thee, or she shall die." He called his guards, and said to them, "Go and fetch her, for I will make her suffer so much that she shall repent of her obstinacy." They went to the poultry-yard, and found Joliette in a white satin dress, embroidered all over with gold, with pink diamonds, and more than a thousand yards of ribbon all about it.[1] Never had they seen so fine a lady, in all her grandeur; they did not dare speak to her, taking her for a princess. She said very civilly to them, "Pray tell me whom you seek here?" "Madam," said they, "we are looking for a miserable little wretch they call Joliette." "Alas! it is I," said she; "what do you want with me?" They instantly seized her, and tied her feet and hands with thick cords, for fear she would run away. They led her in this manner to the wicked king, who was with his son. When he saw her so beautiful, he could not avoid being a little moved; and no doubt would have had pity upon her had he not been one of the most wicked and cruel men in the world. He said to her, "Hah! hah! little rogue: little toad! you will not then love my son? He is a hundred times handsomer than you are! one of his looks is worth more than your whole person. Come, love him directly, or I will have you flayed." The princess, trembling like a little pigeon, knelt before him, and said, "Sire, I intreat you not to flay me: that would be too cruel. Let me have two or three days to think what I ought to

[1] The enormous quantity of ribbons worn at this period by gentlemen, as well as ladies, makes this scarcely an exaggeration.

do, after which, be it as you will." His son, in a state of fury, insisted on her being flayed. They agreed at last to shut her up in a tower, where she could see nothing but the sky. At this moment the good fairy arrived in her flying chariot, with the queen. They heard all the news. The queen began to cry bitterly, saying how unfortunate she always was, and that she would rather her child was dead than that she should marry the wicked king's son. The fairy said to her, "Take courage; I am going to worry them so much that you will be satisfied and avenged." When the wicked king went to bed, the fairy transformed herself into a little mouse, and hid herself under the bolster of the bed. As soon as he wished to sleep she bit his ear; he became very angry; he turned on the other side; she bit the other ear. He cried out "Murder!" He called for some one to come to him; they came; they found his two ears bitten, and bleeding so much that they could not stop the blood. While they were looking everywhere for the mouse, she went to the wicked king's son, and served him in like manner. He called up his people and showed them his ears, which were all skinned, and they put plaisters on them. The little mouse returned to the wicked king's room, who had become a little drowsy; she bit his nose, and continued to nibble at it; he put his hands up to it; she bit them and scratched them. He cried out, "Mercy! I am lost!" She got into his mouth, and nibbled his tongue, his cheeks, his lips, his eyes. They came to him; they saw him quite overpowered; he could scarcely speak, his tongue was so bad; he made signs that it was a mouse; they looked for it in the mattress, in the bolster, in every corner; she was no longer there. She ran and served the son still worse, and ate his good eye (for he was already blind with one). He rose like a madman, sword in hand; he was quite blind; he ran into his father's room, who had also taken his sword, storming and swearing that he would kill everybody if they did not catch the mouse. When he saw his son in such a fury he scolded him; and the latter was so heated by passion that he did not recognise his father's voice, and fell upon him. The wicked king, much enraged, wounded his son with his sword; he received a wound in return; they both of them fell to the ground, bathed in blood. All their subjects, who hated them mortally, and who only obeyed them through terror, fearing them no longer, tied cords around their feet and dragged them into the river, saying they were quite delighted to get rid of them. Thus died the wicked king and his son. The good fairy, who knew what had occurred, sought the queen, and they hastened to the black tower, where Joliette was shut up under more than forty locks. The fairy struck the great door three times with a little wand of hazel wood. It flew open, as did also all the others. They found the poor princess very sad, who did not say a single word. The queen threw herself upon her neck. "My dear child," said she to her, "I am thy mother, the Queen Joyeuse." She then related to her the history of her life. When Joliette heard so much good news she was nearly dying with pleasure. She fell at the queen's feet; she embraced her knees, moistened her hands with her tears, and kissed them a thousand times. She affectionately caressed the fairy, who had brought her baskets full of valuable jewels, gold, diamonds, bracelets, pearls, and the portrait of

King Joyeux surrounded by precious stones, all of which she placed before her. "Let us lose no time," said the fairy, "we must make a coup d'état; let us go into the great hall of the castle, and harangue the people." She walked first, with a grave and serious face, having on a dress with a train more than ten yards long, and the queen in one of blue velvet, embroidered in gold, with a much longer train. (They had brought their robes of state with them.) They had also crowns upon their heads, as brilliant as suns. The Princess Joliette followed, distinguished by her marvellous beauty and modesty. They courtesied to all whom they met, gentle and simple. They were followed by crowds, anxious to know who these fine ladies could be. When the hall was quite full, the good fairy told the wicked king's subjects that she would give them for a queen King Joyeux's daughter, whom they saw before them; that they would live very happy under her government; that, if they accepted her, she would find her a husband as perfect as herself, who would be always cheerful, and banish melancholy from every heart. At these words every one exclaimed, "Yes, yes, she shall be our queen; we have been too long sad and miserable." At the same moment a hundred different instruments began to play on all sides, every one joined hands and danced a round,[1] singing to the queen, her daughter, and the good fairy:—"Yes! yes! she shall be our queen," &c. Such was their reception, and never was so much happiness known; they spread the tables, they ate and drank, and then went to bed and slept soundly. When the princess arose next morning, the fairy presented to her the handsomest prince that had ever been seen. She had been to the very end of the world to fetch him, in her flying chariot; he was as amiable as Joliette. The moment she saw him, she loved him. He, on his side, was charmed with her, and the queen was transported with joy. They prepared a splendid banquet and wonderfully fine dresses, and the marriage ceremony was performed amidst the greatest rejoicings.

"The unfortunate queen,
Whose distress you have seen,
In prison—abandon'd—forlorn—
By perils beset,
O'er her poor Joliette
Might have wept from the hour she was born,
Had not a kind fay,
Who had many a day,
As a mouse, shared her commons so short,
With gratitude warm,
Bravely weather'd the storm,
And brought their bark safe into port!
This is but a fable,
Yet from it I'm able
A moral perchance to impart:
To all things be kind,
And let gratitude find
For ever a place in your heart."

[1] Rounds were dances in a ring, formed by the joined hands of the dancers, and amongst the oldest of such amusements, "Sellenger's Round" is said to be the earliest of which the air has descended to us. It has been traced up nearly to the reign of Henry VIII.

# THE RAM

IN the happy times when fairies existed, there reigned a king who had three daughters. They were young and beautiful, and all three possessed considerable merit; but the youngest was the most amiable and the best beloved. They called her Merveilleuse. The king her father gave her more gowns and ribbons in a month than he gave the others in a year, and she was so good-natured that she shared everything with her sisters, so that there subsisted the best understanding among them.

The king had some very bad neighbours, who, weary of peace, formed so powerful a league against him, that he was compelled to arm in self-defence. He raised a large force, and took the field at its head. The three princesses remained with their tutors in a castle, where they heard every day good news of the king. At one time he had taken a city, at another he had won a battle; at length he succeeded in completely routing his enemies, and driving them out of his dominions. He then returned with all speed to the castle to see his little Merveilleuse, of whom he was so fond.

The three princesses had had made for themselves three satin gowns—one green, one blue, and the third white. Their jewels were selected to match their dresses. The green was enriched with emeralds; the blue with turquoises; and the white with diamonds. Thus attired, they went to meet the king, singing the following verses, which they had written to celebrate his victories:—

"With conquest crown'd on many a glorious plain,
What joy to greet our king and sire again!
Welcome him back, victorious, to these halls,
With new delights and countless festivals;
Let shouts of joy and songs of triumph prove
His people's loyalty, his daughters' love!"

When the king saw them so lovely, and in such splendid dresses, he embraced them all tenderly, but caressed Merveilleuse more than he did the others.

A magnificent banquet was served up: the king and his three daughters sat down to table; and as it was his habit to draw inferences from everything, he said to the eldest, "Tell me, pray, why have you put on a green gown?" "Sire," she answered, "having heard of your achievements, I fancied that green would express the joy and hope with which your return inspired me." "That is very prettily said!" exclaimed the king. "And you, my child," he continued; "why do you wear a blue gown?" "My liege,"

said the princess, "to indicate that we should unceasingly implore for you the protection of the gods, and also that the sight of you is to me like that of heaven and all the starry host!" "You speak like an oracle!" said the king. "And you, Merveilleuse; what reason had you for dressing yourself in white?" "Because, sire," she answered, "it becomes me better than any colour." "How!" cried the king, very much offended; "was that your only motive, you little coquette?" "My motive was to please you," said the princess; "it appears to me that I ought to have no other." The king, who loved her dearly, was so perfectly satisfied with this explanation, that he declared himself much pleased by the little turn she had given to her meaning, and the art with which she had at first concealed the compliment. "There! there!" said he, "I have made an excellent supper. I shall not go to bed yet. Tell me what you all dreamed of the night before my return." The eldest said she dreamed that he had brought her a gown, the gold and jewels of which shone brighter than the sun. The second said she dreamed that he had brought her a golden distaff to spin herself some shifts with. The youngest said she dreamed that he had married her second sister, and that on the wedding-day he held a golden ewer, and said, "Merveilleuse, come hither and wash."

The king, indignant at this dream, knit his brow, and made an exceedingly wry face. Everybody saw he was very angry. He retired to his chamber, and flung himself into bed. He could not forget his daughter's dream. "This insolent little creature," said he, "would degrade me into her servant. I should not be surprised if she had put on white satin without thinking of me at all. She holds me unworthy of consideration. But I will frustrate her wicked designs while there is time." He rose in a fury; and though it was not yet daylight, he sent for the captain of his guards, and said to him, "You have heard the dream of Merveilleuse: it prognosticates strange things against me. I command you to seize her immediately, to take her into the forest, and kill her, after which, you will bring me her heart and her tongue, that I may be sure you have not deceived me, or I will have you put to death in the most cruel manner possible." The captain of the guards was astounded at this barbarous order. He dared not remonstrate with the king, for fear of increasing his anger, and causing him to give the horrible commission to another. He assured him he would take the princess and kill her, and bring him her heart and her tongue.

The captain went directly to the princess's apartment, where he found some difficulty in obtaining admission, for it was still very early. He informed Merveilleuse that the king desired to see her. She rose immediately; a little Moorish girl, named Patypata, carried her train. A young ape, and a little dog, who always accompanied her, ran after her. The ape was called Grabugeon, and the little dog, Tintin. The captain of the guards made Merveilleuse descend into the garden, where he told her the king was taking the fresh morning air. She entered it; the captain pretended to look for the king, and not finding him, said, "No doubt his majesty has walked on into the wood." He opened a little door, and led the princess into the forest. It was just getting light: the princess

looked at her conductor; he had tears in his eyes, and was so dejected that he could not speak. "What is the matter?" inquired she in the kindest tone: "you seem very much distressed." "Ah, madam!" exclaimed he; "who could be otherwise at the most dreadful order that was ever given! The king has commanded me to kill you in this forest, and to take him your heart and your tongue. If I fail to do so he will put me to death." The poor princess turned pale with terror, and began to weep silently. She looked like a little lamb about to be sacrificed. She fixed her beautiful eyes on the captain of the guards, and looking at him without anger, said, "Will you really have the heart to kill me—me, who never did you any harm, and who always spoke well of you to the king? If I had deserved my father's hate I could have suffered the consequences without a murmur; but, alas! I have shown him so much respect and affection that he cannot with justice complain of me." "Fear not, beautiful princess," said the captain of the guards; "I am incapable of so barbarous a deed. Rather would I suffer the death he has threatened me with: but should I kill myself you would not be the safer for it. We must find some means by which I can return to the king, and persuade him that you are dead."

"What means can we find?" said Merveilleuse; "for he has ordered you to bring him my tongue and my heart, and without you do so he will not believe you." Patypata, who had heard all that had passed, and of whose presence neither the captain of the guards nor the princess was aware, so absorbed were they in their affliction, advanced boldly, and threw herself at the feet of Merveilleuse. "Madam," said she, "I offer you my life. You must kill me. I shall be too happy to die for so good a mistress." "Oh! I can never permit it, my dear Patypata," said the princess kissing her. "After so touching a proof of thy friendship, thy life must be as dear to me as my own." Grabugeon then stepped forward, and said, "You have reason, princess, to love so faithful a slave as Patypata; she can be of much more use to you than I. I offer you my tongue and heart with joy, wishing to immortalise myself in the annals of the empire of monkeys." "Ah, my darling Grabugeon," replied Merveilleuse, "I cannot bear the idea of taking thy life!" "It would be insupportable to me," exclaimed Tintin, "good little dog as I am, should any one but myself lay down their life for my mistress. Either I will die, or nobody shall die." Upon this there arose a great altercation between Patypata, Grabugeon, and Tintin. They came to big words. At last, Grabugeon, more hasty than the others, ran up to the very top of a tree, and flinging herself down head foremost, was killed on the spot. Much as the princess lamented her, she consented, as the poor thing was dead, that the captain of the guards should cut out her tongue; but it was so small (for altogether the creature was not bigger than one's fist), that to their great grief they felt convinced the king would not be deceived by it.

"Alas! my dear little ape, behold thee dead then," cried the princess, "without my life being insured by the sacrifice of thine!" "It is for me that honour is reserved," interrupted the Moor, snatching up as she spoke the knife that had been used upon

Grabugeon, and plunging it into her bosom. The captain of the guards would have taken her tongue, but it was so black that he could not flatter himself he could cheat the king with it.

"Am I not most unfortunate?" said the princess weeping. "I lose all those I love, and yet my lot remains unchanged." "Had you accepted my offer," said Tintin, "you would only have had to regret my loss, and I should have had the satisfaction of being the only one regretted." Merveilleuse kissed her little dog, weeping so bitterly over him that she was quite exhausted. She turned hastily away, and when she ventured again to look round, her conductor was gone, and she found herself alone with the dead bodies of her Moor, her ape, and her little dog. She could not quit the spot till she had buried them in a hole which she found by chance at the foot of a tree, upon which she afterwards scratched these words:—

"Three faithful friends lie buried in this grave,
Who sacrificed themselves my life to save."

She then began to think of her own safety, and as there was none for her in that forest, which was so close to her father's castle that the first person who saw her would recognise her, or where she might be eaten like a chicken by the lions and wolves that infested it, she set off walking as fast as she could. But the forest was so extensive, and the sun so powerful, that she was soon ready to die with heat, fear, and weariness. She gazed about her everywhere, without being able to see the termination of the wood. Everything alarmed her. She fancied continually the king was in pursuit of her, to kill her. It is impossible to repeat all the lamentations she naturally gave utterance to.

She walked on without following any particular path, the thickets tearing her beautiful dress and scratching her white skin. At length she heard a sheep bleat. "No doubt," said she, "there are some shepherds here with their flocks. They may direct me to some village where I may conceal myself in the dress of a peasant. Alas!" continued she, "sovereigns and princes are not always the happiest persons in the world. Who in all this kingdom would believe that I am a fugitive, that my father without cause or reason seeks my life, and that to save it I must disguise myself?"

Whilst making these reflections she advanced towards the spot from whence the bleating proceeded. What was her surprise, on arriving in an open space surrounded by trees, to see a large ram, whiter than snow, whose horns were gilt, who had a garland of flowers round his neck, his legs entwined with ropes of pearls of prodigious size, and chains of diamonds hung about him, and who was reposing on a couch of orange blossoms. A pavilion of cloth of gold suspended in the air sheltered him from the rays of the sun. A hundred gaily-decked sheep were around him, who in lieu of browsing on the grass, were taking, some, coffee, sherbet, ices, and lemonade; others, strawberries and cream, and sweetmeats. Some were playing at basset, others at lansquenet. Several wore collars of gold, ornamented with gallant devices, earrings, and ribbons, and flowers in profusion. Merveilleuse was so astonished that she remained almost motionless.

Her eyes wandered in search of the shepherd who had the care of this extraordinary flock, when the beautiful ram came bounding and frisking up to her. "Approach, divine princess," said he to her, "and fear nothing from such gentle and peaceful animals as we are." "What prodigy is this? A talking ram!" exclaimed the princess. "Eh, madam," rejoined the ram, "your ape and your little dog spoke very prettily. Had you less cause to be surprised at that?" "A fairy," replied Merveilleuse, "had bestowed the gift of speech on them, which made the matter less wonderful." "A similar adventure may perchance have befallen ourselves," answered the ram, smiling in a sheepish manner. "But what caused you to turn your steps this way, my princess?" "A thousand misfortunes, my lord ram," said she to him; "I am the most unhappy person in the world. I seek an asylum from the fury of my father." "Come, madam," replied the ram; "come with me. I offer you one which can be known only to yourself, and you shall be absolute mistress in it." "It is impossible for me to follow you," said Merveilleuse; "I am dying with fatigue."

The ram with the golden horns ordered his chariot to be sent for. The next moment they led forward six goats harnessed to a pumpkin of such a prodigious size that two persons could sit in it with the greatest ease. The pumpkin was dry, and the inside hollowed out and fitted with capital down cushions, and lined with velvet throughout. The princess got into it, admiring so novel an equipage. The master-ram seated himself in the pumpkin beside her, and the goats took them at full gallop to a cavern, the entrance to which was closed by a large stone. The golden-horned ram touched the stone with his foot, and it immediately fell. He told the princess to enter without fear: she believed the cavern to be a horrible place, and had her alarm been less, nothing could have induced her to descend into it; but her apprehensions of pursuit were so great that she would at that moment have thrown herself into a well.

She followed, therefore, without hesitation the ram, who walked before her to show her the way down, which ran so deep, so deep, that she fancied she must be going at least to the antipodes, and sometimes feared he was conducting her to the regions of the dead.

At length she suddenly discovered a vast plain, enamelled with a thousand different flowers, whose delicious perfume surpassed that of any she had ever met with; a broad river of orange-flower water flowed around it; fountains of Spanish wine, rossolis,[1] hipocras, and a thousand other sorts of liqueurs formed charming cascades and little rivulets. The plain was covered with singular trees. There were entire avenues of them, with partridges better larded and dressed than you would get them at La Guerbois',[2] hanging

[1] See note to page 2. Hipocras was an artificial wine, usually made of claret and spices.

[2] The name of a famous traiteur, or rôtisseur, to be added to those of Mignot and Bergerat, immortalised by Boileau. "There is a cook-shop in the Rue St. Honoré," writes an English traveller of that period, "where 300 men are employed in larding of fowl all at a time. The master keeps a register of the places where they live, and of the times when they are to bring in fowl larded. He told me he sometimes dressed dinners of a thousand livres [francs]."—"View of Paris," 1701.

on the branches. In other avenues they were laden with quails, young rabbits, turkeys, chickens, pheasants, and ortolans. In certain parts, where the atmosphere appeared a little hazy, it rained bisques d'écrevisse, and other soups; foies-gras, ragouts of sweetbreads, white puddings, sausages, tarts, patties, sweetmeats, both wet and dry; besides louis-d'ors, crowns, pearls, and diamonds. Showers so rare, as well as so useful, would no doubt have attracted very excellent company if the great ram had been more inclined to mix with society in general; but all the chronicles in which he is mentioned concur in assuring us that he was as reserved as a Roman senator.

As it was in the finest time of the year that Merveilleuse had arrived in these beautiful regions, she saw no other palace than what was formed by long lines of orange-trees, jasmins, honeysuckles, and little musk-roses, whose interlaced branches formed cabinets, halls, and chambers, all hung with gold and silver gauze, and furnished with large mirrors, lustres, and admirable paintings.

The master ram told the princess to consider herself the sovereign of these regions; that for some years past he had had much cause for sorrow and tears; but that it only depended on her to make him forget all his misfortunes. "There is something so generous in your behaviour, charming ram," said she to him, "and everything I see here appears to me so extraordinary, that I know not what to make of it."

She had scarcely uttered these words when there appeared before her a troop of nymphs of the most admirable beauty. They presented her with fruit in baskets of amber, but when she advanced towards them they insensibly receded; she extended her hands to touch them, but felt nothing, and ascertained that they were only phantoms. "Oh! what means this?" she exclaimed. "Who are these around me?" She began to weep, and king ram (for so they called him), who had left her for a few minutes, returning and finding her in tears, was in such despair that he felt he should die at her feet.

"What is the matter, lovely princess?" he inquired. "Has any one in these dominions been wanting in the respect due to you?" "No," answered she; "I do not complain of any one; I only confess to you that I am unaccustomed to live among the dead, and with sheep that talk. Everything here frightens me, and greatly obliged as I am to you for bringing me hither, I shall be more so if you will take me back into the world."

"Do not be alarmed," replied the ram; "deign to listen to me calmly, and you shall hear my sad history.

"I was born to a throne. A long line of kings, my ancestors, had secured me the possession of the finest kingdom in the universe. My subjects loved me. I was feared and envied by my neighbours, and generally respected, with some justice. It was said that no king had ever been more worthy of such homage. My personal appearance was not without its attractions to those who saw me. I was exceedingly fond of hunting, and the eager pursuit of a stag having separated me from my attendants, I suddenly saw

him plunge into a pond. I spurred my horse in after him, as imprudently as boldly, but instead of the coldness of the water, I felt an extraordinary heat. The pond dried up, and through an opening, out of which issued terrible flames, I fell to the bottom of a precipice, where nothing was to be seen but fire.

"I thought myself lost, when I heard a voice which said to me, 'No less fire could warm thy heart, ungrateful one!' 'Hah! who is it that complains of my coldness?' said I. 'An unfortunate who adores thee without hope,' replied the voice. At the same moment the flames were extinguished, and I perceived a fairy whom I had known from my earliest infancy, and whose age and ugliness had always horrified me. She was leaning on a young slave of incomparable beauty; the golden chains she wore sufficiently betokened her condition. 'What prodigy is this, Ragotte,' said I to her (so is the fairy named), can this really be by your orders?' 'By whose orders should it be?' replied the fairy. 'Is it but now thou hast learned the state of my heart? Must I undergo the shame of explaining myself? Have my eyes, once so certain of their power, lost all their influence? Consider how low I stoop! 'Tis I who make this confession of my weakness to thee, who, great king as thou mayest be, art less than an ant compared to a fairy like me.' 'I am whatever you please,' said I to her impatiently, 'but what is it you demand of me? is it my crown, my cities, my treasures?' 'Ah, wretch!' she replied disdainfully, 'my scullions, if I chose it, could be more powerful than thou. I demand thy heart. My eyes have asked thee for it a thousand and a thousand times. Thou hast not understood them, or rather, thou wouldst not understand them. Hadst thou been desperately in love with another,' continued she, 'I would not have interrupted the progress of thy passion; but I had too great an interest in thee not to discover the indifference that reigned in thy heart. Well then, love me!' added she, pursing up her mouth to make it look more agreeable, and rolling her eyes about; 'I will be thy little Ragotte, I will add twenty kingdoms to that thou hast already, an hundred towers full of gold, five hundred full of silver—in a word, all thou canst wish for.' 'Madam Ragotte,' said I to her, 'it is not at the bottom of a pit, in which I expect to be roasted, that I should think of making a declaration to a person of your merit; I implore you by all the charms that adorn you to set me at liberty, and then we will consider together what can be done for your satisfaction.' 'Hah, traitor!' she exclaimed, 'if thou didst love me, thou wouldst not seek the road back to thy kingdom; in a grotto, in a fox-hole, in the woods, in the deserts, thou wouldst be happy. Think not that I am such a novice. Thou hopest to escape, but I give thee notice that thou shalt remain here, and thy first task shall be to keep my sheep. They are intelligent animals, and speak at least as well as thou canst.'

"So saying she advanced with me into the plain where we now are, and showed me her flock. I paid little attention to them; the beauty of the slave beside her appeared to me marvellous; my eyes betrayed me. The cruel Ragotte, noticing my admiration, flew upon her and plunged a bodkin into one of her eyes with such violence that the

adorable girl fell dead upon the spot. At this horrible sight I threw myself upon Ragotte, and, sword in hand, would have immolated her to those dear manes, if by her power she had not rendered me motionless. All my efforts were in vain; I fell to the earth, and sought for means to slay myself, to end the agony I was in, when the fairy said to me with an ironical smile, 'I will make thee know my power; thou art a lion at present, thou shalt become a sheep.'

"At the same moment she touched me with her wand, and I found myself transformed as you behold me. I have not lost the faculty of speech, nor the sense of affliction which my position occasioned me. 'Thou shalt be a sheep for five years,' said she, 'and absolute master of these beautiful realms, while, far from thee and no longer beholding thy handsome face, I will brood only over the hate I owe thee.'

"She disappeared, and if anything could have lightened my misfortune, it would have been her absence. The talking sheep you see here acknowledged me as their king; they informed me that they were unfortunate mortals who had in various ways given offence to the vindictive fairy, and had been formed by her into a flock; that the penance of some was of less duration than that of others. In fact," he added, "every now and then they become what they were before, and leave the flock. As for the shadows you have seen, they are those of the rivals and enemies of Ragotte whom she has deprived of life for a century or so, and who will afterwards return to the world. The young slave I spoke of is amongst them. I have seen her several times with great pleasure, although she did not speak to me, and on approaching her I had the vexation to find it was but her shade; finding however that one of my sheep was very attentive to this little phantom, I discovered that he was her lover, and that Ragotte, out of jealousy, had taken him from her. For this reason, I have since avoided the shade of the slave, and during three years have sighed for nothing but my liberty.

"In the hope of regaining it, I frequently wander into the forest. There I saw you, beautiful princess," continued he, "sometimes in a chariot which you drove yourself with more skill than the sun does his own, sometimes following the chase on a steed that seemed as if he would obey no other rider, or contending in the race with the ladies of your court, flying lightly over the plain, you won the prize, like another Atalanta. Ah, princess, if, during all this time in which my heart paid you its secret homage, I had dared to address you, what should I not have said? But how would you have received the declaration of an unhappy sheep like me?"

Merveilleuse was so agitated by all she had heard, that she scarcely knew how to answer him. She said some civil things to him, however, which gave him a little hope, and told him that she was less alarmed at the ghosts now that she knew their owners would revive again. "Alas!" continued she, "if my poor Patypata, my dear Grabugeon, and the pretty Tintin, who died to save me, could meet with a similar fate, I should not be so melancholy here."

Notwithstanding the degradation of the royal ram, he possessed some very great

privileges. "Go," said he to his grand equerry (a very good-looking sheep), "go fetch the Moor, the ape, and the little dog; their shades will amuse our princess." The next moment they appeared, and although they did not approach Merveilleuse near enough for her to touch them, their presence was a great consolation to her.

The royal ram had all the sense and delicacy which is required for agreeable conversation. He was so passionately fond of Merveilleuse that she began also to have some regard for him, and at length to love him. A pretty sheep, very gentle, very affectionate, is not unlikely to please one, particularly when it is known he is a king, and that his transformation will shortly terminate. The princess thus passed her days in peace, awaiting a happier lot.

The gallant ram thought of nothing but her. He gave fêtes, concerts, hunts; his flock assisted him cordially; even the shades played their parts in the entertainments.

One day, on the arrival of the couriers—for he regularly sent out for the news, and always had the first and best intelligence—he learned that the eldest sister of Princess Merveilleuse was about to marry a great prince, and that nothing could be more magnificent than the preparations they were making for the nuptials. "Ah!" said the young princess, "how unfortunate I am to be deprived of the sight of so many fine things! Here am I underground, amongst ghosts and sheep, whilst my sister is appearing to all the world in queenly splendour. Everybody will pay court to her; I alone shall have no share in her joy." "What reason have you to complain, madam?" said the king of the sheep; "have I refused you permission to go to the wedding? Depart as soon as you please, only give me your word that you will return. If you do not agree to that, you will see me expire at your feet, for my attachment to you is too violent for me to lose you and live." Merveilleuse, much affected, promised the ram that nothing in the world should prevent her return. He provided her with an equipage befitting her birth. She was superbly dressed, and nothing was forgotten that could increase her beauty. She entered a chariot of mother-of-pearl, drawn by six Isabella-coloured[1] hypogriffins, newly arrived from the antipodes. She was accompanied by a great number of exceedingly handsome officers, richly attired. The royal ram had sent for them from a great distance, to form the train of the princess.

She arrived at her father's court at the moment the marriage was being celebrated. As soon as she appeared, she dazzled everybody by the blaze of her beauty and of the jewels which adorned her. She heard nothing around her but acclamations and praises. The king gazed on her with such eagerness and pleasure that she was afraid he would

[1] The Infanta Isabella, daughter of Philip II., King of Spain, wife of the Archduke Albert, made a vow at the siege of Ostend in 1602, that, till the city was taken, she would never change her clothes. Contrary to expectation, it was three years before the place was reduced, by which time her highness's linen had acquired a hue better imagined than described. The superstition of the times, however, gave a fashion to it, and what we now call dun-colour became popular, and is to this day in France called "couleur Isabelle."

recognise her; but he was so convinced of her death that he had not the least idea she was his daughter.

The fear, notwithstanding, that she should be detained, prevented her staying to quite the end of the ceremony. She departed abruptly, leaving a little coral box, garnished with emeralds, and with these words on it, in diamond sparks: "Jewels for the Bride." They opened it immediately, and what did they not find in it! The king, who had hoped to see her again and was burning to know who she was, was in despair at her departure. He gave strict orders that if she ever returned they should shut the gates upon her and detain her.

Brief as had been the absence of Merveilleuse, it had seemed an age to the ram. He waited for her by the side of a fountain in the thickest part of the forest. He had immense treasures displayed there, with the intention of presenting them to her in gratitude for her return. As soon as he saw her, he ran towards her, bounding and frisking like a true sheep. He lay down at her feet, he kissed her hands, he told her all his anxiety and his impatience. His passion inspired him with an eloquence which quite charmed the princess.

Some short time afterwards the king married his second daughter. Merveilleuse heard of it, and entreated the ram to permit her to witness, as before, a fête in which she took so much interest.

At this request he felt a pang which he could not suppress. A secret presentiment foretold to him some misfortune; but as we cannot always avoid evil, and his consideration for the princess overruled every other feeling, he had not the heart to refuse her. "You desire to leave me, madam," said he; "for this misfortune I must blame my sad destiny more than you. I consent to your wish, and I can never make you a greater sacrifice."

She assured him that she would return as quickly as she did the first time: that she should be deeply pained by anything that could keep her from him; and intreated him not to be uneasy about her. She went in the same state as before, and arrived just as they were commencing the marriage ceremony. Despite the attention they were paying to it, her presence caused exclamations of joy and admiration, which drew the eyes of all the princes upon her. They could not cease looking at her, and felt her beauty to be so extraordinary that they were ready to believe she must be something more than mortal.

The king was charmed to see her once more. He never took his eyes off her, except to order all the doors to be closed to prevent her departure. The ceremony being nearly concluded, the princess rose hastily that she might disappear in the crowd, but she was extremely surprised and distressed to find that all the gates were locked.

The king accosted her with great respect and a submissive air that reassured her. He begged her not to deprive them so soon of the pleasure of seeing her, and that she

would remain and grace the banquet he was about to give the princes and princesses who had honoured him with their presence on this occasion. He led her into a magnificent saloon, in which all the court were assembled, and offered to her himself a golden basin and a ewer filled with water, that she might wash her beautiful hands. At this she could no longer suppress her emotions; she flung herself at his feet, and, embracing his knees, exclaimed, "Behold, my dream has come true! You have offered me water to wash with on my sister's wedding day without any evil befalling you."

The king recognised her with less difficulty, as he had more than once been struck by her great resemblance to Merveilleuse. "Ah! my dear daughter," said he, embracing her with tears in his eyes, "can you forget my cruelty? I sought your life because I thought your dream prognosticated the loss of my crown. It did so, indeed," continued he, "for here are your two sisters married, and each has a crown of her own, therefore mine shall be yours." So saying he rose, and placed his crown on the head of the princess, crying, "Long live Queen Merveilleuse!" All the court repeated the shout. The two sisters of the young queen came and threw their arms around her neck, and kissed her a thousand times. Merveilleuse was so happy she could not express her feelings. She cried and laughed at the same moment. She embraced one, talked to another, thanked the king, and, in the midst of all this, recollected the captain of the guard to whom she was under so much obligation, and asked eagerly to see him, but they informed her he was dead. She felt his loss deeply.

When they sat down to table, the king requested her to relate all that had happened to her since the day he had issued such fatal orders respecting her. She immediately commenced the narrative, with the most admirable grace, and everybody listened to her attentively.

But whilst she was thus engrossed by the king and her sisters, the enamoured ram saw the hour fixed for the return of the princess pass by, and his anxiety became so extreme that he could not control it. "She will never return," he cried; "my miserable sheep's face disgusts her. Oh! too unfortunate lover, what will become of me if I have lost Merveilleuse? Ragotte! barbarous fairy! how hast thou avenged thyself for my indifference to thee!" He indulged in such lamentations for a long time, and then, finding night approach without any signs of the princess, he ran to the city. When he reached the king's palace, he asked to see Merveilleuse; but as everybody was now aware of her adventures, and by no means desired that she should return to the realms of the ram, they harshly refused to admit him to her presence. He uttered cries and lamentations capable of moving any one except the Swiss guard who stood sentry at the palace gates. At length, broken-hearted, he flung himself on the ground, and breathed his last sigh.

The king and Merveilleuse knew nothing of the sad tragedy which had taken place. The king proposed to his daughter to mount a triumphal car, and show herself to all the

city by the lights of thousands and thousands of flambeaux which illuminated the windows and all the great squares; but what a horrible spectacle for her, to see, as she issued from the palace gates—her dear ram stretched breathless on the pavement! She threw herself from the car, she ran to him, she wept, she groaned, she knew that her unpunctuality had caused the death of the royal ram. In her despair she felt she should die herself.

It was then admitted that persons of the highest rank are subject, like others, to the blows of fortune, and that they frequently meet with the greatest misery at the very moment they believe themselves to have attained the height of their wishes.

"The choicest blessings sent by Heaven
Oft to our ruin only tend;
The charms, the talents, to us given,
But bring to us a mournful end.
The royal ram had happier been
Without the graces which first led
Ragotte to love, then hurl her mean
But fatal vengeance on his head.
Sure he deserved a better fate,
Who spurn'd a sordid Hymen's chains;
Honest his love—unmask'd his hate—
How different from our modern swains!
Even his death may well surprise
The lovers of the present day,—
Only a silly sheep now dies,
Because his ewe has gone astray."

# FINETTE CENDRON

ONCE on a time there was a king and a queen who had managed their affairs very badly. They were driven out of their kingdom. They sold their crowns to support themselves; then their wardrobes, their linen, their lace, and all their furniture, piece by piece. The brokers were tired of purchasing, for every day something or other was sent for sale. When they had disposed of nearly everything, the king said to the queen, "We are out of our own country, and have no longer any property. We must do something to get a living for ourselves and our poor children. Consider a little what we can do: for up to this time I have known no trade but a king's, which is a very agreeable one." The queen had much good sense; she asked for eight days to think the matter over; at the end of that time she said to the king, "Sire, we must not make ourselves unhappy. You have only to make nets, with which you may catch both fowl and fish. As the lines wear out, I will spin to make new ones. With respect to our three daughters, they are downright idle girls, who still think themselves fine ladies, and would fain live in that style without work. We must take them to such a distance—such a distance, that they can never find their way back again, for it will be impossible for us to keep them as fine as they would like to be."

The king began to weep when he found he must separate himself from his children. He was a kind father; but the queen was mistress; he therefore agreed to whatever she proposed. He said to her, "Get up early to-morrow morning, and take your three daughters wherever you think fit." Whilst they were thus plotting together, the Princess Finette, who was the youngest daughter, listened at the key-hole, and when she discovered the design of her father and mother, she set off as fast as she could for a great grotto, at a considerable distance from where they lived, and which was the abode of the fairy, Merluche, who was her godmother.

Finette had taken with her two pounds of fresh butter, some eggs, some milk, and some flour, to make a nice cake for her godmother, in order that she might be well received by her. She commenced her journey gaily enough; but the further she went, the more weary she grew. The soles of her shoes were worn completely through, and her pretty little feet became so sore that it was sad to see them. She was quite exhausted; she sat down on the grass and cried. A beautiful Spanish horse came by, saddled and bridled. There were more diamonds on his housings than would purchase

three cities, and when he saw the princess he stopped and began to graze quietly beside her. Bending his knees he appeared to pay homage to her; upon which, taking him by the bridle, "Gentle Hobby," said she, "wouldst thou kindly bear me to my fairy godmother's? Thou wouldst do me great service; for I am so weary that I feel ready to die: but if thou wilt assist me on this occasion, I will give thee good oats and good hay, and a litter of fresh straw to lie upon." The horse bent himself almost to the ground, and young Finette jumping upon him, he galloped off with her as lightly as a bird. He stopped at the entrance of the grotto, as if he had known where he was to go to; and, in fact, he knew well enough; for it was Merluche herself who, having foreseen her goddaughter's visit, had sent the fine horse for her.

As soon as Finette entered the grotto, she made three profound courtesies to her godmother, and took the hem of her gown and kissed it, and then said to her, "Good-day, godmother, how do you do? I have brought you some butter, milk, flour, and eggs, to make a cake with after our country fashion." "You are welcome, Finette," said the fairy; "come hither that I may embrace you." She kissed her twice, at which Finette was greatly delighted, for Madame Merluche was not one of those fairies you might find by the dozen. "Come, goddaughter," said she, "you shall be my little lady's maid. Take down my hair and comb it." The princess took her hair down, and combed it as cleverly as possible. "I know well enough," said Merluche, "what brought you hither. You overheard the king and queen consulting how they might lose you, and you would avoid this misfortune. Here, you have only to take this skein of thread; it will never break. Fasten one end of it to the door of your house, and keep the other end in your hand; when the queen leaves you, you will easily find your way back by following the thread.

The princess thanked her godmother, who gave her a bag full of fine dresses all of gold and silver. She embraced her, placed her again on the pretty horse, and in two or three minutes he carried Finette to the door of their majesties' cottage. "My little

friend," said Finette to the horse, "you are very handsome and clever; your speed is as great as the sun's. I thank you for your service. Return to the place you came from." She entered the house softly, and hiding her bag under her bolster, went to bed, without appearing to know anything that had taken place. At break of day the king woke his wife: "Come, come, madam," said he, "make ready for your journey." She got up directly, took her thick shoes, a short petticoat, a white jacket, and a stick. She summoned her eldest daughter, who was named Fleur d'Amour; her second, who was named Belle-de-Nuit; and her third, named Fine-Oreille, whom they familiarly called Finette. "I have been thinking all last night," said the queen, "that we ought to go and see my sister; she will entertain us capitally. We may feast and laugh as much as we like there." Fleur d'Amour, who was in despair at living in a desert, said to her mother, "Let us go, madam, wherever you please; provided I may walk somewhere, I don't care." The two others said as much. They took leave of the king, and set off all four together. They went so far—so far, that Fine-Oreille was much afraid her thread would not be long enough, for they had gone nearly a thousand leagues. She walked always behind the others, drawing the thread cleverly through the thickets.

When the queen imagined that her daughters could not find the way back she entered a thick wood, and said to them, "Sleep, my little lambs, I will be like the shepherdess, who watches over her flock for fear the wolf should devour them." They laid themselves down on the grass, and went to sleep. The queen left them there, believing she should never see them again. Finette had shut her eyes, but not gone to sleep. "If I were an ill-natured girl," said she to herself, "I should go home directly and leave my sisters to die here, for they beat me and scratch me till the blood comes. But, notwithstanding all their malice, I will not abandon them." She aroused them, and told them the whole story. They began to cry, and begged her to take them with her, promising that they would give her beautiful dolls, a child's set of silver plate, and all their other toys and sweetmeats. "I am quite sure you will do no such thing," said Finette; "but I will behave as a good sister should for all that." And so saying she rose, and followed the clue with the two princesses, so that they reached home almost as soon as the queen. Whilst they were at the door they heard the king say, "It gives me the heartache to see you come back alone." "Pshaw!" said the queen, "our daughters were too great an incumbrance to us." "But," said the king, "if you had brought back my Finette, I might have consoled myself for the loss of the others, for they loved nothing and nobody" At that moment they knocked at the door—rap, rap. "Who is there?" said the king. Your three daughters," they repli d, "Fleur d'Amour, Belle-de-Nuit, and Fine Oreille." The queen began to tremble. "Don't open the door," she exclaimed; "it must be their ghosts, for it is impossible they could find their way back alive." The king, who was as great a coward as his wife, called out, "It is false! you are not my daughters!" but Fin -Oreille, who was a shrewd girl, said to him, "Papa, I will stoop down, and do you look at me through the hole made for the cat to come

through, and if I am not Finette I consent to be whipped." The king looked as she told him to do, and as soon as he recognised her he opened the door. The queen pretended to be delighted to see them again, and said, "that she had forgotten something, and had come home to fetch it; but that most assuredly she should have returned to them." They pretended to believe her, and went up to a snug little hay-loft, in which they always slept.

"Now, sisters," said Finette, "you promised me a doll; give it me." "Thou mayst wait for it long enough, little rogue," said they. "Thou art the cause of the king's caring so little for us;" and thereupon, snatching up their distaffs, they beat her as if she had been so much mortar. When they had beaten her as much as they chose they let her go to bed, but as she was covered with wounds and bruises she could not sleep, and she heard the queen say to the king, "I will take them in another direction, much further, and I am confident they will never return." When Finette heard this plot, she rose very softly to go and see her godmother again. She went into the hen-yard and took two hens and a cock, and wrung their necks, also two little rabbits that the queen was fattening upon cabbages to make a feast of on the next occasion. She put them all into a basket and set off: but she had not gone a league, groping her way and quaking with fear, when the Spanish horse came up at a gallop, snorting and neighing. She thought it was all over with her; that some soldiers were about to seize her. When she saw the beautiful horse all alone, she jumped upon him, delighted to travel so comfortably, and arrived almost immediately at her godmother's.

After the usual ceremonies, she presented her with the hens, the cock, and the rabbits, and begged the assistance of her good advice, the queen having sworn she would lead them to the end of the world. Merluche told her goddaughter not to afflict herself, and gave her a sack full of ashes. "Carry this sack before you," said she, "and shake it as you go along. You will walk on the ashes, and when you wish to return you will have only to follow your footmarks; but do not bring your sisters

back with you. They are too malicious, and if you do bring them back I will never see you again." Finette took leave of her, taking away by her order thirty or forty millions of diamonds in a little box, which she put in her pocket. The horse was ready in waiting, and carried her home as before. At daybreak the queen called the princesses. They came to her, and she said to them, "The king is not very well; I dreamed last night that I ought to go and gather for him some flowers and herbs in a certain country where they grow in great perfection. They will completely renovate him, therefore let us go there directly." Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit, who never thought their mother intended to lose them again, were much grieved at these tidings. Go, however, they must; and so far did they go that never before had any one made so long a journey. Finette, who never said a word, kept behind, and shook her sack of ashes with such wonderful skill that neither the wind nor the rain affected them.

The queen being perfectly persuaded that they could not find their way back again, and observing one evening that her three daughters were fast asleep, took the opportunity of leaving them, and returned home. As soon as it was light, and Finette found her mother was gone, she awoke her sisters. "We are alone," said she; "the queen has left us." Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit began to cry; they tore their hair, and beat their own faces with their fists, exclaiming, "Alas! what will become of us!" Finette was the best-hearted girl in the world! She had compassion again on her sisters. "See now to what I expose myself," said she to them; "for when my godmother furnished me with means to return, she forbade me to show you the way, and told me that if I disobeyed her she would never see me more." Belle-de-Nuit threw herself on Finette's neck, Fleur d'Amour did the same, kissing her so affectionately that it required nothing more to bring them all three back together to the king and the queen.

Their majesties were greatly surprised at the return of the princesses. They talked about it all night long, and the youngest, who was not called Fine-Oreille for nothing, heard them concoct a new plot, and arrange that the next morning the queen should again take them on a journey. She ran to wake her sisters; "Alas!" said she to them, "we are lost! The queen is determined to lead us into some wilderness, and leave us there. For your sakes I have offended my godmother: I dare not go to her for advice as I used to do." They were in sad trouble, and said one to another, "What shall we do, sister; what shall we do?" At length Belle-de-Nuit said to the two others, "Why should we worry ourselves? old Merluche has not got all the wit in the world—some other folks may have a little. We have only to take plenty of peas with us and drop them all along the road as we go, and we shall be sure to trace our way back." Fleur d'Amour thought the idea admirable; they loaded themselves with peas, filling all their pockets; but Fine-Oreille, instead of peas, took her bag full of fine clothes, and the little box of diamonds, and as soon as the queen called them they were ready to go. She said to them, "I dreamed last night that in a country which it is unnecessary to name, there are three handsome princes, who are waiting to marry you. I am going to take

you there, to see if my dream is true." The queen went first and her daughters followed her, dropping their peas without any anxiety, for they made sure of being able to find their way home.

This time the queen went further than ever she had gone before; but during one dark night she left the princesses, and reached home very weary, but very happy to have got rid of so great a burthen as her three daughters.

The three princesses having slept till eleven o'clock in the morning, awoke, and Finette was the first to discover the queen's absence. Although she was perfectly prepared for it, she could not help crying, trusting for her return much more to the power of her fairy godmother than to the cleverness of her sisters. She went to them in a great fright, and said, "The queen is gone; we must follow her as quickly as possible." "Hold thy tongue, little mischievous animal," replied Fleur d'Amour; "we can find our way well enough when we choose; you are making a great fuss at a wrong season, gossip." Finette durst not make any answer. When, however, they did try to retrace their steps, there were no signs or paths to be found. There are immense flocks of pigeons in that country, and they had eaten up all the peas. The princesses began to cry and scream with grief and terror. After being two days without food, Fleur d'Amour said to Belle de-Nuit, "Sister, hast thou nothing to eat?" "Nothing," she replied. She put the same question to Finette. "Nor have I," she answered, "but I have just found an acorn." "Ah! give it to me," said one; "give it to me," said the other. Each insisted on having it. "An acorn will not go far amongst three of us," said Finette; "let us plant it; there may spring a tree from it which may be useful to us." They consented, although there was little chance of a tree growing in a country where none were to be seen. They could find only cabbages and lettuces, on which the princesses lived. If they had been very delicate they must have died a hundred times. They slept almost always in the open air, and every morning and evening they took it by turns to water the acorn, saying to it, "Grow, grow, beautiful acorn!" It began to grow so fast that you could see it grow. When it had got to some size, Fleur d'Amour tried to climb it, but it was not strong enough to bear her; she felt it bend under her weight, and so she came down again. Belle-de-Nuit was not more successful. Finette, being lighter, managed to get up and remain a long time. Her sisters called to her, "Canst thou see anything, sister?" She answered, "No, I can see nothing." "Ah, then, the oak is not tall enough," said Fleur d'Amour; so they continued to water it, and say, "Grow, grow, beautiful acorn!" Finette never failed climbing it twice a-day. One morning when she was up in the tree, Belle-de-Nuit said to Fleur d'Amour, "I have found a bag which our sister has hidden from us. What can there be in it?" Fleur d'Amour replied, "She told me it contained some old lace she had got to mend." "I believe it is full of sugar-plums," said Belle-de-Nuit. She had a sweet tooth, and determined to ascertain the fact. She opened the bag, and found in it actually a quantity of old lace belonging to the king and queen, but hidden beneath it were the fine clothes

the fairy had given to Finette, and the box of diamonds. "Well, now! was there ever such a sly little rogue?" exclaimed Belle-de-Nuit; "we will take out all the things, and put some stones in their place." They did so directly. Finette rejoined them, without observing what they had done, for she never dreamed of decking herself out in a desert; she thought of nothing but the oak, which speedily became the finest oak that ever was seen.

One day that she had climbed up into it, and that her sisters as usual asked her if she could see anything, she exclaimed, "I can see a large mansion, so fine—so fine, that I want words to describe it; the walls are of emeralds and rubies, the roof of diamonds; it is all covered with golden bells and weathercocks that whirl about as the wind blows." "Thou liest," said they; "it cannot be as fine as thou sayest." "Believe me," replied Finette, "I am no story-teller; come and see for yourselves; my eyes are quite dazzled by it." Fleur d'Amour climbed up the tree. When she saw the château she could talk of nothing else. Belle-de-Nuit, who had a great deal of curiosity, failed not to climb in her turn, and was as much enchanted as her sisters at the sight of the château. "We must certainly go to this palace," they said; "perhaps we shall find in it some handsome princes, who will be only too happy to marry us." They talked the whole evening long on this subject, and lay down to sleep on the grass; but when Finette appeared to them in a sound slumber, Fleur d'Amour said to Belle-de-Nuit, "I'll tell you what we should do, sister; let us get up and dress ourselves in the fine clothes Finette has brought hither." "You are in the right," said Belle-de-Nuit; so they got up, curled their hair, powdered it, put patches on their cheeks,[1] and dressed themselves in the beautiful gold and silver gowns all covered with diamonds. Never was anything so magnificent. Finette, ignorant of the theft her wicked sisters had committed, took up her bag with the intention of dressing herself, but was vastly distressed to find nothing in it but flints. At the same moment she perceived her sisters shining like suns. She wept, and complained of the treachery they had been guilty of towards her, but they only laughed and made a joke of it. "Is it possible," said she to them, "that you will have the effrontery to take me to the château, without dressing and making me as fine as you are?" "We have barely enough for ourselves," replied Fleur d'Amour. "Thou shalt have nothing but blows, an' thou importunest us." "But," continued she, "the clothes you have on are mine; my godmother gave them to me. You have no claim to them." "If thou sayest more about it," said they, "we will knock thee on the head, and bury thee without any one being the wiser!" Poor Finette did not dare provoke them; she followed them slowly, walking some short distance behind them, as if she were only their servant.

The nearer they approached to the mansion the more wonderful it appeared to

[1] The fashion of patching the face with small pieces of court-plaister, cut sometimes into the most fantastic shapes, was carried to the greatest extreme at the close of the seventeenth and commencement of the eighteenth centuries.

them. "Oh!" said Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit, "how we shall amuse ourselves! What capital dinners we shall get! We shall dine at the king's table; but Finette will have to wash the dishes in the kitchen, for she looks like a scullion; and if anybody asks who she is, we must take care not to call her our sister; we must say she is the little cowkeeper in the village." The lovely and sensible Finette was in despair at being so ill-treated.

When they reached the castle-gate they knocked at it. It was opened immediately by a terrific old woman. She had but one eye, which was in the middle of her forehead, but it was bigger than five or six ordinary ones. Her nose was flat, her complexion swarthy, and her mouth so horrible that it frightened you to look at it. She was fifteen feet high, and measured thirty round her body. "Unfortunate wretches!" said she to them, "what brought ye hither? Know ye not this is the ogre's castle, and that all three of you would scarcely suffice for his breakfast? But I am more good-natured than my husband. Come in; I will not eat you all at once. You shall have the consolation of living two or three days longer." When they heard the ogress say this, they ran away, hoping to escape; but one of her strides was equal to fifty of theirs. She ran after and caught them, one by the hair, the others by the nape of the neck; and putting them under her arm took them into the castle, and threw them all three into the cellar, which was full of toads and adders, and strewed with the bones of those the ogres had eaten.

As the ogress fancied eating Finette immediately, she went to fetch some vinegar, oil, and salt, to make her into a salad, but hearing the ogre coming, and thinking that the princesses were so white and delicate that she should like to eat them all herself, she popped them quickly under a large tub, out of which they could only look through a hole.

The ogre was six times as tall as his wife; when he spoke the building shook, and when he coughed it was like peals of thunder. He had but one great filthy eye; his hair stood all on end; he leaned on a huge log of wood which he used for a cane. He

had a covered basket in his hand, out of which he pulled fifteen little children he had stolen on the road, and swallowed them like fifteen new-laid eggs. When the princesses saw him they trembled under the tub. They were afraid to cry, lest they should be heard, but they whispered to each other, "He will eat us all alive; is there no way to save ourselves?"

The ogre said to his wife, "Look ye, I smell fresh meat; give it me." "That's good!" said the ogress; "thou dost always fancy thou smellest fresh meat; it is thy sheep which have just passed by." "Oh! I am not mistaken," said the ogre; "I smell fresh meat for certain, and I shall hunt everywhere for it." "Hunt," said she; "thou wilt find nothing." "If I do find it, and thou hast hidden it from me," replied the ogre, "I will cut thy head off, and make a ball of it." She was frightened at this threat, and said, "Be not angry, my dear little ogre, I will tell thee the truth. Three young girls came here to-day, and I have got them safe, but it would be a pity to eat them, for they know how to do everything. I am old and want rest; thou seest our fine house is very dirty, that our bread is badly made, and thy soup now rarely pleases thee; that I myself do not appear so handsome in thine eyes since I have worked so hard. These girls will be my servants. I pray thee do not eat them just now; if thou shouldst fancy one of them some other day, they will be always in thy power."

The ogre was very reluctant to promise that he would not eat them immediately. "Let me alone," said he, "I will only eat two of them." "No, thou shalt not eat them." "Well, then, I will only eat the smallest;" and she replied, "No, thou shalt not touch one of them." At last, after much contention, he promised he would not eat them. She thought to herself, "When he goes hunting I will eat them, and tell him they have made their escape."

The ogre came out of the cellar, and told his wife to bring the girls before him. The poor princesses were almost dead with fright; the ogress tried to comfort them. When they were brought before the ogre, he asked them what they could do. They answered, they could sweep, and sew, and spin, exceedingly well; that they could make ragouts so delicious that you would eat even the plates; and as for bread, cakes, and patties, people had been wont to send to them for a thousand leagues round. The ogre was dainty. "Aha!" said he, "set these good housewives to work immediately; but," said he to Finette, "after you have lighted the fire, how do you know when the oven is hot enough?" "My lord," she replied, "I throw some butter into it, and then taste it with my tongue." "Very well," said he; "light the oven fire, then." The oven was as big as a stable, for the ogre and ogress ate more bread than would feed two armies. The princess made a terrific fire. The oven was as hot as a furnace; and the ogre, who was present, waiting for his new bread, ate in the meanwhile a hundred lambs and a hundred little sucking-pigs. Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit were making the dough. "Well," said the great ogre, "is the oven hot?" "You shall see, my lord," said Finette. She threw in a thousand pounds of butter, and then said to him, "It

should be tasted with the tongue, but I am too short to reach it." "I am tall enough," said the ogre; and stooping, he thrust his body so far into the oven that he could not recover himself, and so all the flesh was burnt off his bones. When the ogress came to the oven she was astounded to find her husband a mountain of cinders!

Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit, who saw she was very much distressed, consoled her to the best of their ability, but they feared her grief would too soon subside, and, her appetite returning, she would make a salad of them as she was about to do before. They said to her, "Take comfort, madam, you will find some king or some marquis who will be delighted to marry you." She smiled a little, showing her teeth longer than one's fingers.

When they saw her in such a good humour, Finette said to her, "If you would throw off these horrible bear-skins in which you wrap yourself, and follow the fashion, we will dress your hair to perfection, and you will look like a star." "Come," said the ogress, "let us see what thou wouldst do; but assure thyself that if there be any ladies handsomer than me I will make mincemeat of thee!" Upon this the three princesses took off her cap, and began combing and curling her hair, amusing her all the while with their chatter. Finette then taking a hatchet, struck her from behind such a blow that her head was taken clean from her shoulders.

Never was there such delight! The three princesses mounted upon the roof of the mansion to amuse themselves by ringing the golden bells. They ran into all the apartments, which were of pearls and diamonds, and the furniture so costly, that they were ready to die with pleasure. They laughed, they sang, they wanted for nothing. There were corn, sweetmeats, fruit, and dolls, in abundance. Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit went to sleep in beds of brocade and velvet, and said to each other, "Behold us richer than our father was when he was in possession of his kingdom; but we want to be married, and nobody will venture here. This mansion no doubt is considered a cut-throat place, for people are not aware of the death of the ogre and ogress. We must go to the nearest city, and show ourselves in our fine dresses, and we shall soon find some honest bankers who will be very glad to marry princesses." As soon as they were dressed, they told Finette they were going to take a walk; that she must stay at home and cook, and wash and clean the house, so that on their return they might find everything as it should be; if not, she should be beaten within an inch of her life! Poor Finette, whose heart was full of grief, remained alone in the house, sweeping, cleaning, washing, without resting, and crying all the time. "How unfortunate," she said, "that I should have disobeyed my godmother! All sorts of evils happen to me; my sisters have stolen my costly dresses, and array themselves in my ornaments. But for me, the ogre and his wife would be alive and well at this moment. How have I benefited by destroying them?" When she had said this she sobbed till she was almost choked. Shortly afterwards her sisters returned laden with Portugal oranges, preserves, and sugar. "Ah!" said they to her, "what a splendid ball we have been to! How it was

crowded! The king's son was amongst the dancers; we have had a thousand compliments paid to us. Come, take our shoes off and clean them, as it is your business to do." Finette obeyed them, and if by accident she let a word drop in the way of complaint, they flew at her, and beat her almost to death.

The next day they went out again, and returned with an account of new wonders. One evening when Finette was sitting in the chimney corner on a heap of cinders, not knowing what to do, she examined the cracks in the chimney, and found in one of them a little key so old and so dirty that she had the greatest trouble in cleaning it. When she had done so she found it was made of gold, and presuming that a golden key ought to open some beautiful little box, she ran all over the mansion trying it in all the locks, and at length found it fitted that of a casket which was a masterpiece of art. She opened it, and found it full of clothes, diamonds, lace, linen, and ribbons, worth immense sums of money. She said not a word of her good luck to her sisters, but waited impatiently for their going out the next day. As soon as they were out of sight she dressed and adorned herself, till she looked more beautiful than the sun and moon together.

Thus arrayed, she went to the ball where her sisters were dancing, and though she had no mask on,[1] she was so changed for the better that they did not know her. As soon as she appeared a murmur arose throughout the assembly; some were full of admiration, others of jealousy. She was asked to dance, and surpassed all the other ladies in grace as much as she did in beauty. The mistress of the mansion came to her, and making her a profound courtesy, requested to know her name, that she might always remember with pleasure the appellation of such a marvellously beautiful person. She replied civilly that her name was Cendron. There was not a lover who did not leave his mistress for Cendron: not a poet who did not make verses on Cendron. Never did a little name make so much noise in so short a time. The echoes repeated nothing but the praises of Cendron. People had not eyes enough to gaze upon her, nor tongues enough to extol her.

Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit, who had previously created a great sensation wherever they appeared, observing the reception accorded to this new comer, were ready to burst with spite: but Finette extricated herself from all ill-consequences with the best grace in the world. Her manners appeared those of one born to command.

Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit, who never saw their sister but with her face begrimed with soot from the chimney, and altogether as dirty as a dog, had so completely lost all idea of her beauty that they did not recognise her in the least. They paid their court to Cendron, as well as the rest. As soon as she saw the ball was nearly over, she hastened away, returned home, undressed herself quickly, and put on her old rags. When her sisters arrived, "Ah! Finette," said they to her, "we have just seen a young princess who is perfectly charming. She is not a young ape such as thou art, she is as white as snow, with a richer crimson than the roses; her teeth are pearls, her lips coral; she had a gown

[1] The mask was a fashionable article of female costume in France during the reign of Louis XIV., and was not entirely discarded in England before the eighteenth century.

on that must have weighed more than a thousand pounds. It was all gold and diamonds. How beautiful! how amiable she is!" Finette said in a low voice, "So was I; so was I." "What dost thou mutter there?" said her sisters. She repeated in a still lower tone, "So was I; so was I." This little game was played for some time. There was scarcely a day that Finette did not appear in a new dress; for the casket was a fairy one, and the more you took out of it the more there came in, and everything so highly fashionable, that all the ladies dressed themselves in imitation of Finette.

One evening that Finette had danced more than usual, and had delayed her departure to a later hour, being anxious to make up for lost time and get home a little before her sisters, she walked so fast that she lost one of her slippers, which was of red velvet, embroidered with pearls. She tried to find it in the road, but the night was so dark, her search was in vain, and she entered the house one foot shod and the other not. The next day, Prince Chéri, the king's eldest son, going out hunting, found Finette's slipper. He had it picked up, examined it, admired its diminutive size and elegance, turned it over and over, kissed it, took care of it and carried it home with him. From that day he would eat nothing, he became thin, and altered visibly; was yellow as a quince, melancholy, depressed. The king and queen, who loved him to distraction, sent in every direction for the choicest game and the best sweetmeats. They were less than nothing to him. He looked at them all without uttering a word in reply to his mother when she spoke to him. They sent everywhere for the first physicians, even as far as Paris, and Montpellier.[1] When they arrived they saw the prince, and after watching him for three days and three nights without once losing sight of him, they came to the conclusion that he was in love, and that he would die if they did not find the only remedy for him. The queen, who doted on her son, was nearly dissolved in tears, so great was her grief at not being able to discover the object of his love, that he might marry her. She brought into his apartment the most beautiful ladies she could find. He would not condescend to look at them. At length she said to him, one day, "My dear son, thou wilt kill me with grief, for thou lovest and concealest from us thy passion. Tell us whom thou lovest, and we will give her to thee, though she should only be a simple shepherdess." The prince taking courage from the promises of the queen, drew the slipper from under his bolster, and showing it to her, said, "Behold, madam, the cause of my malady. I found this little, soft, delicate, pretty slipper as I went out to hunt, and I will never marry any one but the woman who can wear it." "Well, my son," said the queen, "do not afflict yourself, we will have her sought for." She hastened to the king with this intelligence. He was very much surprised, and ordered immediately that a proclamation should be made with sound of drum and trumpet, that all single women should come and try on the slipper, and that she whom

[1] The School of Medicine of Montpellier is one of the most eminent in Europe, and owes its establishment to the Moorish physicians driven out of Spain by the Christians, A.D. 1186, and received here by the lords of Montpellier. From its first establishment, it has been much resorted to; and many of the most celebrated French physicians and surgeons received their education there.

it fitted should marry the prince. On hearing this every one washed their feet with all sorts of waters, pastes and pomades; some ladies actually had them peeled, and others starved themselves in order to make their feet smaller and prettier.

They went in crowds to try on the slipper, but not one of them could get it on, and the more they came in vain, the greater was the prince's affliction. Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit dressed themselves one day so superbly, that they were astonishing to look at. "Where can you be going to?" asked Finette. "We are going to the great city," replied they, "where the king and queen reside, to try on the slipper the king's son has found; for if it should fit either of us, the prince will marry her, and then my sister or I will be a queen." "And why should not I go?" said Finette. "Thou art a pretty simpleton, truly," said they; "go, go, and water our cabbages; thou art fit for nothing better."

Finette thought directly she would put on her finest clothes, and go and take her chance with the rest, for she had a slight suspicion that she should be successful. What troubled her was, that she did not know her way; for the ball at which she had danced was not given in the great city. She dressed herself magnificently; her gown was of blue satin, covered with stars in diamonds. She had a sun of them in her hair, and a full moon on her back; and all these jewels shone so brightly, that one couldn't look at her without winking. When she opened the door to go out, she was much surprised to see the pretty Spanish horse which had carried her to her godmother's. She patted him, and said, "You are most welcome, my little hobby. I am much obliged to my godmother, Merluche." He knelt down, and she mounted upon him like a nymph: he was all covered with golden bells and ribbons. His housings and bridle were priceless, and Finette was thirty times more beautiful than fair Helen of Troy.

The Spanish horse galloped off gaily, his bells went ting,ting, ting. Fleur d'Amour and Belle-de-Nuit, hearing the sound of them, turned round and saw her coming; but what was their astonishment at that moment? They knew her to be both Finette and Cendron. They were very much splashed, their fine dresses draggled with mud. "Sister!" cried

Fleur d'Amour to Belle-de-Nuit, "I protest here is Finette Cendron." The other echoed the cry; and Finette passing close to them, her horse splashed them all over, making them a mass of mud. Finette laughed at them, and said, "Your highnesses, Cendron[1] despises you as you deserve;" then passing them like a shot, she disappeared. Belle-de-Nuit and Fleur d'Amour looked at each other. "Are we dreaming?" said they; "who could have supplied Finette with clothes and a horse? What miracle is this? Good fortune attends her; she will put on the slipper, and we shall have made a long journey in vain."

Whilst they were distressing themselves, Finette arrived at the palace. The moment she appeared everybody thought she was a queen. The guards presented arms, the drums beat, and the trumpets sounded a flourish; all the gates were flung open, and those who had seen her at the ball preceded her, crying, "Room! room! for the beautiful Cendron, the wonder of the world!" She entered in this state the apartment of the dying prince. He cast his eyes on her, and enraptured at her sight, wished fervently that her foot might be small enough for her to wear the slipper. She put it on instantly, and produced its fellow which she had brought with her on purpose. Shouts immediately arose of "Long live the Princess Chérie!—long live the princess who will be our queen!" The prince arose from his couch, and advanced to kiss her hand; she found he was handsome and very intelligent. He paid her a thousand delicate attentions. The king and queen were informed of the event. They came in all haste, and the queen took Finette in her arms, called her her daughter, her darling, her little queen! and made her some magnificent presents, to which the liberal king added many more. They fired the guns; violins, bagpipes, every sort of musical instrument was set playing; nothing was talked of but dancing and rejoicing. The king, the queen, and the prince, begged Cendron to consent to the marriage taking place immediately. "No," said she, "I must first tell you my history," which she did in a few words. When they found that she was a princess born, there was another burst of joy, which was almost the death of them; but when she told them the names of the king and queen, her father and mother, they recognised them as the sovereigns whose dominions they had conquered. They imparted this fact to Finette, and she immediately vowed she would not consent to marry the prince until they had restored the estates of her father. They promised to do so, for they had upwards of a hundred kingdoms, and one more or less was not worth talking about.

In the meanwhile Belle-de-Nuit and Fleur d'Amour arrived at the palace. The first news that greeted them was that Cendron had put on the slipper. They knew not what to do or to say; they determined to go back again without seeing her; but when she heard they were there, she insisted they should come in, and instead of frowning on them and punishing them as they deserved, she rose and advanced to meet them, embraced them tenderly, and then presented them to the queen, saying to her, "Madam,

[1] Cendr*illon* in the French; but whether a mistake, or used as a diminutive for "little Cendron," it is curious when we consider the similitude between this part of the story and the Cendrillon of Persault.

these are my sisters; they are very amiable, and I request you will love them." They were so confused at the kindness of Finette, that they could not utter a word. She promised them they should return to their own kingdom, which the king would restore to their family. At these words they threw themselves on their knees before her, weeping for joy.

The nuptials were the most splendid that ever were seen. Finette wrote to her godmother and put the letter, accompanied with valuable presents, on the back of the pretty Spanish horse, begging her to seek the king and queen, to tell them their good fortune, and that they had nothing to do but return to their kingdom. The fairy, Merluche, acquitted herself very graciously of this commission. The father and mother of Finette were repossessed of their estates, and her sisters became afterwards queens as well as herself.

"Revenged on the ungrateful wouldst thou be
Of young Finette pursue the policy.
Fresh favours on the undeserving heap;
Each benefit inflicts a wound most deep,
Cutting the conscious bosom to the core.
Finette's proud, selfish sisters suffer'd more,
When by her generous kindness overpower'd,
Than if by ogres they had been devour'd.
From her example then this lesson learn,
And good for evil nobly still return;
Whate'er the wrong that may thy wrath awake
No grander vengeance for it couldst thou take."

# *FORTUNÉE*

THERE was once upon a time a poor husbandman, who, feeling himself at the point of death, did not wish to leave behind him any subjects of dispute between his son and daughter, whom he tenderly loved. So he said to them, "Your mother brought me as a wedding portion two joint-stools and a straw mattress. There they are with my hen; also I have a pot of pinks, and a plain silver ring, which were given me by a great lady who once lived in my poor hut. She said to me at parting, 'My good man, there is a present I make you; be careful to well water the pinks and to lock up safely the ring. In addition to this, your daughter shall be incomparably beautiful. Name her Fortunée, and give her this ring and these pinks to console her for her poverty.' Thus," continued the good man, "my dear Fortunée, you shall have both the one and the other; the rest shall be for your brother." The two children of the husbandman appeared contented; he died; they wept, and the division of property was made without an appeal to the law.

Fortunée thought that her brother loved her, but one day when she had taken one of the stools for a seat, he said with great fierceness, "Keep your pinks and your ring, but do not disarrange my stools; I like order in my house." Fortunée, who was very gentle, began to weep silently, and remained standing whilst Bedou (that was her brother's name) was seated in state like a judge. Supper time arrived. Bedou had an excellent new-laid egg from his only hen, and he threw the shell at his sister. "There," he

said, "I have nothing else to give you; if that does not suit you, go and hunt for frogs: there are plenty in the neighbouring marsh." Fortunée made no answer; she only raised her eyes to heaven, wept again, and then went to her own room. She found it filled with perfume, and never doubting that it was the scent of the pinks, she approached them sadly and said, "Beautiful pinks, whose variety is so charming to my sight, you who console my afflicted heart by the sweet perfume you exhale, do not fear that I shall let you want for water, or with cruel hand, that I shall tear you from your stem. I shall cherish you, for you are my only treasures." As she ceased speaking, she looked to see if the plants then required watering—they were very dry. She took her pitcher, and hastened by the light of the moon to the fountain, which was at some distance. As she had walked fast, she sat down by the side of the fountain to rest; but she had scarcely been there a moment when she saw a lady approaching, whose majestic air was in perfect accordance with the numerous attendants who accompanied her; six maids of honour carried her train, she leant on two others; her guards walked before her, richly dressed in amaranth velvet, embroidered with pearls. They carried an arm-chair, covered with cloth of gold, in which she seated herself, and a field-canopy which was quickly arranged; at the same time, they set out a buffet. It was covered with vessels of gold and vases of crystal. They served an excellent supper by the side of the fountain, the sweet murmurs of which seemed to accompany a number of voices that sang these words:—

"Softest zephyrs fan our groves
Flora garlands every glade;
Happy birds declare their loves
Deep within the leafy shade;
Listen to their warblings sweet.
And if thy heart with love would beat,
Choose amongst the countless swains
Who would glory in thy chains."

Fortunée remained in a corner, not daring to move, so much was she surprised at all that was passing. In a few moments this great queen said to one of her equerries, "I fancy I see a shepherdess near that thicket; let her approach." Fortunée immediately advanced, and though she was naturally timid, she did not omit to make a profound courtesy to the queen with so much grace, that those who saw her were perfectly astonished. She took the hem of the queen's robe and kissed it, and then stood erect before her, her eyes modestly cast down, and her cheeks coloured with crimson, which heightened the brilliant whiteness of her complexion. It was easy to remark in her manners that simplicity and sweetness which are so charming in young maidens.

"What are you doing here, pretty girl?" said the queen; "are you not afraid of robbers?" "Alas! madam," replied Fortunée, "I have but a linen gown; what would they take from a poor shepherdess like me?" "You are not rich, then?" said the queen smiling. "I am so poor," answered Fortunée, "that I only inherited from my father a pot of pinks and a silver ring."

"But you have a heart," said the queen. "If any one wished to have that, would you give it them?" "I do not know what it is to give my heart, madam," she replied. "I have always understood that without a heart we could not live, that if it is wounded we must die, and notwithstanding my poverty I am not sorry to live." "You are quite right to defend your heart, my child; but tell me," continued the queen, "have you had a good supper?" "No, madam," said Fortunée, "my brother ate it all." The queen commanded a cover to be laid for her, and desiring her to be seated, helped her to the very best. The young shepherdess was so lost in admiration, and so charmed with the goodness of the queen, that she could scarcely eat a morsel.

"I am very anxious to know," said the queen, "what has brought you so late to the fountain." "Madam, there is my pitcher, I came to fetch water to water my pinks." Saying this, she stooped to pick up the pitcher which was near her, but as she showed it to the queen, what was her astonishment to find it was a golden one, covered with large diamonds, and filled with water which had a delicious perfume. She dared not take it, thinking it could not be hers. "I give it you, Fortunée," said the queen; "go and water the flowers you take such care of, and remember that the queen of the woods would be numbered amongst your friends." At these words the shepherdess threw herself at the queen's feet. "After having offered you my most humble thanks, madam," she said, "for the honour you have done me, I venture to take the liberty to ask you to remain here a moment. I wish to fetch you the half of my goods—my pot of pinks, which can never be in better hands than yours."

"Go, then, Fortunée," said the queen," gently patting her cheek, "I consent to remain here till your return." Fortunée took her golden pitcher and ran to her little room, but during her absence Bedou had entered, taken away her pot of pinks, and put in their place a large cabbage.

When Fortunée saw this wretched cabbage she was plunged in despair, and hesitated about returning to the fountain at all.

At length she determined she would do so, and throwing herself on her knees before the queen, said, "Madam, Bedou has stolen my flowers; I have nothing now remaining but my ring; I hope you will accept that in proof of my gratitude." "If I take your ring, fair shepherdess," said the queen, "you are completely ruined."

"Ah! madam," she answered with an air of great intelligence, "while I possess your good opinion I can never be ruined." The queen took the ring, placed it on her finger, and then mounted a car of coral, enriched with emeralds, and drawn by six white horses more beautiful than the steeds of the sun.

Fortunée gazed after her as long as she could. At last a turn of the road in the forest hid her from her sight, and she then returned to Bedou's cottage full of this adventure.

The first thing she did on entering her chamber was to throw the cabbage out of the window, but she was much astonished to hear a voice cry, "Ah! I am killed." She

could not tell what to make of this exclamation, as in general cabbages do not speak. As soon as it was light, Fortunée, uneasy about her pot of pinks, went down into the garden to search for them, and the first thing she found was the unhappy cabbage; she gave it a kick, saying, "What dost thou here, thou that didst presume to take in my chamber the place of my pinks?" "If I had not been carried, it would never have entered my head to go there," replied the cabbage. Fortunée trembled, for she was very much frightened; but the cabbage said again to her, "If you will carry me to my companions, I can tell you in two words that your pinks are in Bedou's straw mattress." Fortunée, in despair, knew not how to recover them. She kindly planted the cabbage, and then taking up her brother's favourite hen, she said to it, "Naughty thing, I will now make you pay for all the misery which Bedou has caused me." "Ah! shepherdess," said the hen, "let me live; and, as my fancy is to cackle, I will tell you some wonderful things.

"Do not imagine yourself the daughter of the husbandman who brought you up; no, beautiful Fortunée, he is not your father; but the queen who gave you birth had already six girls, and, as if it were in her own power to have a boy, her husband and father-in-law threatened to stab her if she did not bring him a son and heir. The poor queen was again about to become a mother; they shut her up in a castle, and placed round her guards, or, more properly speaking, executioners, who had orders to kill her if she gave birth to another daughter.

"The queen, trembling at the fate which awaited her, could neither eat nor sleep. She had a sister a fairy. To her she wrote, informing her of her just cause of alarm. The fairy, who was also near her confinement, knew that she would have a son, and as soon as the boy was born, she loaded the zephyrs with a cradle, in which she put her own son, and ordered them to carry the little prince into the queen's chamber, and change him for the daughter which would be born to her; but this forethought was of no avail, for the queen, receiving no answer from her fairy sister, profited by the goodwill of one of her guards, who, out of pity, allowed her to escape by a ladder of ropes.

"As soon as you were in the world, the afflicted queen, trying to hide herself, came to this cottage nearly dead with grief and fatigue. I was the husbandman's wife, and a good nurse. She gave you in charge to me, and told me her misfortunes, by which she was so overwhelmed, that she died without having time to give us any directions respecting what was to be done with you. As I loved gossiping all my life, I could not help telling everybody this adventure; and so one day I told all I knew about it to a beautiful lady who came here. She instantly touched me with a wand, and I became a hen, without power to speak any more. My grief was excessive, and my husband, who was absent at the time of the metamorphose, knew nothing of it. On his return, he looked everywhere for me; finally he thought I was drowned, or that the beasts of the forest had devoured me. This same lady who has done me so much mischief passed by here a second time; she then ordered him to call you Fortunée, and made him a present of a pot of pinks and a silver ring; but whilst she was here there arrived five-and-twenty soldiers of the king, your father, who sought you for evil purposes; she uttered some words, and changed them all into green cabbages. It is one of them you threw out of the window yesterday evening. I never heard him speak till now, nor could I speak myself; I know not how our voices came back to us." The princess was greatly surprised at the wonders which the hen related to her. She was full of kind feeling towards her, and said, "I pity you very much, my poor nurse, to think you should become a hen! I would gladly restore you to your own form if I could, but do not despair. It appears to me that all the affairs you have just acquainted me with cannot be allowed to remain as they are at present. I shall now go and look for my pinks, for I love them dearly."

Bedou was gone into the forest, never imagining that Fortunée would think of hunting in his mattress; she was delighted at his absence, and flattered herself that she would meet with no obstacle, when she suddenly saw an immense number of enormous rats armed for battle. They formed themselves in battalions, having in their rear the famous mattress and one of the stools on each flank; many great mice formed a corps de réserve, determined to fight like amazons. Fortunée, struck with surprise, dared not approach. The rats threw themselves on her, and bit her till she was all over blood. "What!" she exclaimed, "my pinks, my dear pinks, must you remain in such bad company?" It suddenly occurred to her that perhaps the perfumed water which was in the golden vase might possess a peculiar virtue. She ran to fetch it, and threw some drops of it on the host of rats and mice. Immediately the rascals ran away, each into his hole, and the princess quickly laid hands on her beautiful pinks, which were nearly dead for want of water. She at once poured on them all the water she had in her golden vase, and was smelling them with much pleasure, when she heard a sweet voice come from amongst the stalks, which said to her, "Incomparable Fortunée, this is the happy day so long wished for, in which I may declare to you my sentiments. Know that the power of your beauty is so great that it can even inspire flowers with love." The

princess, trembling and surprised at having heard a cabbage, a hen, and a pink speak, and seen an army of rats, turned pale and fainted.

Bedou came in at the moment: labour and the heat of the sun had put him in such a fever, that when he found Fortunée had come to search for her pinks, and had found them, he dragged her to the door and flung her outside. She had scarcely felt the coldness of the earth, before she opened her beautiful eyes and perceived near her the queen of the woods charming and magnificent as usual. "You have a bad brother," she said to Fortunée. "I saw with what inhumanity he threw you out here; would you like me to avenge you?" "No, madam," answered Fortunée; "I have no feelings of anger, and his bad disposition cannot change mine." "But," rejoined the queen, "I have a presentiment which assures me that this rough peasant is not your brother; what do you think?" "All appearances persuade me that he is, madam," replied the shepherdess modestly, "and I ought to believe them." "What!" continued the queen, "have you not heard that you were born a princess?" "I have just been told it," she replied; "but how can I venture to boast of that of which I have no proof?"

"Ah! my dear child," replied the queen, "how I like to see you in this mood; I know now that the mean education you have received has not extinguished the nobility of your blood. Yes, you are a princess, and it has not been in my power to save you from the misfortunes which you have suffered up to this hour." She was here interrupted by the appearance of a youth more beautiful than the day. He was attired in a long robe of gold and green silk, fastened by large buttons of emeralds, rubies, and diamonds. He had a crown of pinks, and his hair covered his shoulders. As soon as he saw the queen, he bent one knee to the ground and saluted her respectfully. "Ha! my son, my amiable pink," she said, "the fatal time of your enchantment is over, thanks to the aid of the beautiful Fortunée; what joy to see you!" She pressed him closely to her bosom, and then turning to the shepherdess, "Charming princess," she said, "I know all that the hen told you; but what you do not know is, that the zephyrs whom I had

ordered to put my son in your place laid him in a bed of flowers whilst they went to find your mother, who was my sister. A fairy, from whose knowledge it was impossible to conceal anything, and with whom I had quarrelled for some time, watched so well for the moment that she had foreseen for the birth of my son, that she changed him on the spot to a pink, and, notwithstanding my science, I could not prevent the misfortune. In the grief in which I was plunged, I employed all my art to discover some remedy, and I could find none better than to bring prince pink to the place where you were nursed, foreseeing that when you had watered the flowers with the delicious water I had in the golden vase, he would speak, he would love you, and in future nothing would disturb your happiness. I had also the silver ring which it was necessary I should receive from you, being aware that that would be the sign by which I should know that the hour approached when the spell would lose its force, in spite of the rats and mice whom our enemy would place in battle array to prevent you recovering the pinks. Thus, my dear Fortunée, if my son marries you with this silver ring, your happiness will be permanent. See if this prince appears sufficiently amiable for you to receive him as a husband." "Madam," replied she blushing, "you overpower me with favours. I know you are my aunt; that, by your power, the guards sent to kill me were metamorphosed into cabbages, and my nurse into a hen; and that in proposing to me an alliance with prince pink, it is the greatest honour you can do me, but shall I tell you the cause of my hesitation? I do not know his heart, and I begin to feel for the first time in my life that I could not be happy if he did not love me."

"Banish all uncertainty on that point, sweet princess," said the prince. "Long ago you made as much impression on me as you could wish at the present moment, and if the use of my voice had been granted me, what would you not have heard of the passion which consumed me; but I am an unhappy prince, for whom you can feel only indifference." He then recited these lines:—

"While but a simple flower to sight,
You lavish'd on me every care;
With pleasure mark'd my blossoms bright,
With joy inhaled my fragrance rare.
For you I breathed my sweetest sigh,
For you my gayest tints display'd,
And drooping when you were not nigh
My passion to express essay'd:
Consuming with my secret flame,
In silence doom'd so long to languish:
With gentle touch you thrill'd my frame,
With gentle look assuaged my anguish.
Sometimes those lovely lips would kiss
My leaves, all trembling with emotion.
Oh then, to tell thee all my bli-s—
To prove my grateful heart's devotion—
In those sweet moments how I pray'd
Some magic power, my fate deploring,
Would break the spell upon me laid,
My shape, my speech again restoring.

My prayer was heard; once more I find
The form, the voice, for which I panted;
But *thou* art changed!—no longer kind!
Ye gods! my prayer why have ye granted?"

The princess seemed well pleased with the prince's gallantry. She highly praised the impromptu, and though she was not accustomed to hear verses, she spoke on the subject like a person of good taste. The queen, who had borne her shepherdess's dress with great impatience, touched her, and wished for her the richest clothes that were ever seen. In a moment, her white linen changed to silver brocade, embroidered with carbuncles; from her high head-dress fell a long veil of gauze, mixed with gold; her black hair was ornamented with a thousand diamonds; and her complexion, whose whiteness was dazzling, assumed so rich a colour that the prince could scarcely support its brilliancy. "Ah! Fortunée, how beautiful and charming you are!" exclaimed he sighing; "will you be inexorable to my pain?" "No, my son," said the queen; "your cousin will not resist our prayers."

While they were thus talking, Bedou, returning to his work, passed them, and seeing Fortunée attired like a goddess, he thought he was dreaming. She called him to her with much kindness, and begged the queen to have pity on him. "What, after having so ill-treated you?" said she. "Ah! madam," replied the princess, "I am incapable of vengeance." The queen embraced her, and praised the generosity of her sentiments. "To gratify you," she rejoined, "I am going to enrich the ungrateful Bedou." His hut became a palace, well furnished, and full of money; his stools and his mattress remained unchanged to remind him of his former state; but the queen of the woods refined his spirit, amended his manners, and improved his appearance. Bedou then found himself possessed of gratitude. What did he not say to the queen and princess, to prove it on this occasion! Finally, by a stroke of the queen's wand, the cabbages became men, the hen a woman. Prince pink remained the only person discontented. He was sighing beside the princess; he conjured her to take a resolution in his favour. At length she

consented ; she had never before seen any loveable object, and all that was most loveable was less so than this prince. The queen of the woods, delighted at so fortunate a marriage, neglected nothing to make it sumptuous. The fêtes on this occasion lasted many years, and the happiness of this tender couple as long as they lived.

"One might have guess'd, without a fairy's aid,
That Fortunée was born a throne to grace:
The brilliant virtues which adorn'd the maid
Proved she had sprung from an illustrious race;
For in her veins ran the high blood of worth,[1]
Virtue alone is true nobility.
O thou with naught to boast of but thy birth,
Learn from my page this lesson with humility.
Vainly thou vauntest that ancestral fame
Which makes thee bearer of a glorious name;
Vainly thou dreamest the purple robe of pride
Thy crimes can justify, thy follies hide.
The wise and good, whatever their estate,
Alone have claims to be accounted great.
Pomp, wealth, and power, without a noble mind,
No place in honour's spotless roll will find."

[1] I presume the "beau sang" to which the countess alludes, as the cause of the "brilliant virtues" of Fortunée, was entirely on the mother's side. The virtue of the poor queen is unquestioned, but that of her royal husband, who threatened to murder her if she did not bring him an heir to his crown is scarcely of that class which we should call brilliant, even in an "antique Roman." The moral is an admirable one. Its only fault appears to me to be, that it has nothing to do with the story.

# *BABIOLE*

ONCE upon a time there was a queen who had nothing on earth to wish for to complete her happiness, except children. She talked of nothing else, and continually said that the fairy, Fanferluche, having attended at her birth, and not being contented with the queen, her mother, had put herself into a passion, and condemned her in consequence to nothing but misfortune.

One day, when she was sitting sadly and alone by the fireside, she saw come down the chimney a little old woman, about the height of your hand, riding on three bits of rushes. She wore on her head a sprig of hawthorn; her dress was composed of flies' wings: two nut shells served her for boots; she sailed in the air, and after taking three turns in the room, she stopped before the queen. "For a long time," said the old woman, "you have been complaining of me, accusing me of all your misfortunes, and making me responsible for all that happens to you. You think, madam, that I am the cause of your having no children. I come now to announce to you that you will have an infanta,[1] but I fear she will cost you many tears." "Ah! noble Fanferluche," said the queen, "do not refuse me your pity and your aid. I will render you all the services in my power, provided the princess you promise me shall be my comfort and not my affliction." "Destiny is more powerful than I," replied the fairy. "All I can do, to show my affection for you, is to give you this white hawthorn; fasten it to your child's head the moment she is born; it will preserve her from many perils." She gave her the sprig, and vanished like lightning.

The queen remained sad and thoughtful. "Why should I wish," she said, "for a daughter who will cost me many tears and sighs? Should I not be happier without any children?" The presence of the king, whom she loved dearly, a little dissipated her grief, and when she found that she should soon become a mother, all her care was to desire her friends, the moment the princess should be born, to lay on her head the hawthorn flower, which she kept in a box of gold covered with diamonds, as the most valuable thing she possessed.

At length the queen gave birth to the most beautiful creature that had ever been seen; they instantly attached to her head the sprig of hawthorn, when, at the same

[1] A princess is so called in Spain.

moment, oh! wondrous! she became a little monkey, jumping, running, and skipping about the room just as a monkey would. At this metamorphose all the ladies uttered the most horrible cries, and the queen, who was more frightened than any one, thought she should have died of despair. She called to them to remove the sprig of hawthorn that they had placed behind the ear; but after the greatest trouble in catching the little ape, they found it useless to remove the fatal flowers; she was a monkey still, a confirmed monkey, refusing to be nursed like a child, and would eat nothing but nuts and chestnuts. "Barbarous Fanferluche," said the queen sadly, "what have I done to thee that thou shouldst use me thus? What will become of me? What a disgrace to me! All my subjects will think I have given birth to a monster. What will be the king's horror at such a child!" She wept, and prayed the ladies to advise her how to act in such an emergency. "Madam," said the oldest of her attendants, "you must persuade the king that the princess is dead, and then shut up this ape in a box, and sink it to the bottom of the sea; for it would be horrible to preserve any longer a little brute of such a kind." The queen found it difficult to agree to this proposal, but as they told her the king was coming to her apartments, she was so confused and agitated, that without further deliberation she told her maid of honour to do what she pleased with the monkey.

They took it into another room, shut it up in a box, and desired one of the valets-de-chambre to throw it into the sea. He instantly departed on his errand.

Behold the princess exposed to extreme danger! The man, however, thinking the box beautiful, was sorry to deprive himself of it; so he seated himself on the sea-shore, and took out the ape, determining to kill it (for he did not know it was his sovereign), but whilst he had hold of it, a great noise which startled him obliged him to turn his head, when he saw an open chariot drawn by six unicorns, resplendent with gold and precious stones. It was preceded by a military band. A queen crowned, and in a royal mantle, was seated in the chariot on cushions of cloth of gold, and she held in her arms her son, a child of four years old.

The valet recognised this queen as the sister of his mistress. She had come to see and rejoice with her, but when she found the little princess was dead, she departed sadly to return to her kingdom. She was lost in thought, when her son cried, "I want that monkey! I will have it." The queen, looking up, beheld the prettiest monkey that ever was seen. The valet endeavoured to escape, but he was prevented. The queen ordered a large sum to be given him for the monkey; and, finding it gentle and playful, she named it Babiole; thus, notwithstanding her hard fate, the princess fell into the hands of her own aunt.

When the queen arrived in her own dominions, the little prince begged her to give him Babiole for a playmate. He desired she should be dressed like a princess; so every day they made her new dresses, and they taught her to walk only on her feet. It was impossible to find a prettier or more agreeable little monkey; her little face was as

black as a jackdaw's, with a white ruff round her neck, and tufts of flesh colour at her ears. Her little paws were not bigger than butterflies' wings, and her sparkling eyes indicated so much intelligence, that there was no need for astonishment at anything she did.

The prince, who loved her very much, petted her unceasingly; she would never bite him, and when he wept, she wept too. She had been already four years with the queen when, one day, she began to stammer like a child trying to talk. Everybody wondered at her, and they were still more astonished when she began to speak in a voice so clear and distinct that every word was intelligible. Marvellous! Babiole speaking! Babiole a reasoning creature! The queen would have her again to amuse her; they therefore carried her to her majesty's apartments, greatly to the grief of the prince. He began to weep; and, to console him, they gave him cats and dogs, birds and squirrels, and even a pony, called Criquetin, which danced a saraband;[1] but all this was to him not worth one word from Babiole.

On her side, she was under greater constraint with the queen than with the prince: they required her to answer like a sybil to a hundred ingenious and learned questions to which she could not always reply. When an ambassador or a stranger arrived, they made her appear in a robe of velvet or brocade with boddice and collar. If the court was in mourning, she had to drag after her a long mantle of crape, which fatigued her very much. They did not allow her to eat what she liked, the physician always ordering her dinner, which did not at all please her, as she was as self-willed as an ape born a princess might be expected to be. The queen gave her masters who tried the powers of her intellect most thoroughly. She excelled in playing on the harpsichord; they had made her a wonderful one in an oyster-shell. Painters came from all quarters of the world, and especially from Italy, to take her likeness. Her renown spread from pole to pole, for no one had ever heard of a monkey endowed with speech.

The prince, as beautiful as the picture of the god of love, graceful and witty, was not less a prodigy. He came to see Babiole, and sometimes amused himself with talking to her; their conversation often changed from gay to grave, for Babiole had a heart, and that heart was not metamorphosed like the rest of her little body. She became, therefore, deeply attached to the prince, and he in return became only too fond of her.

The unfortunate Babiole did not know what to do; she passed her nights on the top of a window-shutter, or on a corner of the chimney-piece, without a wish to enter the basket prepared for her, which was soft, and well lined with wadding and feathers. Her governess (for she had one) often heard her sighing, and sometimes complaining; her melancholy became deeper as her reason increased, and she never saw herself in a looking-glass without trying, out of vexation, to break it, so that people constantly said, "A monkey will always be a monkey; Babiole cannot rid herself of the mischief natural to her species."

[1] A dance originally Moorish.

The prince growing up, became fond of hunting, dancing, plays, arms, and books, and no longer even mentioned the poor little ape. Things were very different on her side of the question: she loved him better at twelve years old than she had at six, and sometimes reproached him with his neglect, while he thought that he made up for everything when he gave her a choice apple or some sugared chestnuts.

At last Babiole's reputation reached even the kingdom of the monkeys, and King Magot conceived a great wish to marry her. With this intention he sent a notable embassy to obtain her from the queen; his prime minister had no difficulty in understanding his wishes, but would have been at great trouble in expressing them, had it not been for the assistance of the parrots and pies, vulgarly called "mags," who chattered not a little, while the jackdaws, who followed in the suire, would not suffer themselves to be outdone in noise.

A huge monkey, named Mirlifiche, was chief of the embassy; he had a carriage made for him of cardboard, and on it were painted the loves of King Magot and the ape Monette, well known in the empire of the monkeys; the, poor thing, had met a tragic end from the claws of a wild cat, who was by no means accustomed to her tricks. There was painted the happiness of Magot and Monette during their marriage, and the natural grief he had displayed at her death. Six white rabbits, from a capital warren, drew the carriage, called by way of distinction a state coach. After this came a chariot made of straw, painted in different colours, and containing the apes destined to attend on Babiole; it was worth anything to see how they were adorned, in fact they looked as if they were going to a wedding. The rest of the cortège was composed of little spaniels, greyhounds, Spanish cats, Muscovy rats, some hedgehogs, cunning weasels, and dainty foxes; some drew the carriages, others carried the baggage. Above all, Mirlifiche, graver than a Roman dictator, and wiser than Cato himself, bestrode a leveret, that ambled along more easily than any English gelding.

The queen knew nothing of this magnificent embassy until it arrived at her palace, but the shouts of laughter from the guards and people inducing her to put her head out of window, she beheld the most extraordinary sight she had ever seen in her life. Mirlifiche, followed by a considerable number of monkeys, advanced towards the chariot of the apes, and, giving his paw to the largest, called Gigona, assisted her to descend; then letting fly the little parrot, who was to serve as interpreter, he waited until this beautiful bird had presented itself to the queen and demanded an audience for him.

Perroquet, raising himself gently in the air, came to the window out of which the queen was looking, and in a tone of voice the prettiest in the world said, "Madam, his excellency the Count de Mirlifiche, ambassador from the celebrated Magot, king of the monkeys, demands an audience of your majesty, to treat of a most important affair." "Beautiful parrot," said the queen, caressing him, "first take something to eat and to drink, and then I will allow you to go and tell Count Mirlifiche I bid him most welcome

to my kingdom, he and all who accompany him. If his journey from Magotia hither has not too much fatigued him, he may shortly enter my audience chamber, where I shall await him on my throne, with all my court." At these words Perroquet kissed his claw twice, flapped his pinions, sang a little air expressive of his delight, and taking wing again perched on the shoulder of Mirlifiche, and whispered to him the favourable reply he had received. Mirlifiche was not insensible of the kindness. He immediately requested one of the queen's officers, through the magpie, Margot, who had installed herself as sub-interpreter, to show him into an apartment where he might repose for a few moments. They immediately opened a saloon paved with marble, painted and gilded, which was one of the best in the palace. He entered it with part of his suite, but as monkeys are always great ferreters by profession, they found a certain corner in which had been arranged a quantity of jars of preserves. Behold the gluttons at them! One has a crystal cup full of apricots, another a bottle of syrup—this one a patty, that one some almond cakes. The winged gentry who made up the cortège were much annoyed to be spectators of a feast in which there was neither hemp-seed nor millet-seed, and a jackdaw, who was a great chatterer, flew to the audience chamber, and, respectfully approaching the queen, said, "Madam, I am too devoted a servant of your majesty's to be a willing accomplice in the havoc which is being made in your very nice sweetmeats. Count Mirlifiche himself has already eaten three boxes full. He was crunching the fourth without any respect to your royal majesty, when, touched to the heart, I came to inform your majesty of it." "I thank you, my little friend jackdaw," said the queen smiling, "but I can dispense with your zeal about my sweetmeats; I abandon them in favour of Babiole, whom I love with all my heart." The jackdaw, a little ashamed at having made a great noise for nothing, retired without another word. The ambassador with his suite shortly after entered the apartment. He was not dressed precisely in the height of the fashion, for since the return of the famous Fagotin,[1] who had cut such a figure in the world, they had never seen a good model. He had a peaked hat, with a plume of green feathers in it, a shoulder-belt of blue paper covered with gold spangles, large canions,[2] and a walking-stick. Perroquet, who passed for a tolerably good poet, having composed a very grave harangue, advanced to the foot of the throne where the queen was seated, and addressed Babiole thus:—

"Madam, the wondrous power of your eyes
In great Magot's fond passion recognise!
These apes, these cats, this equipage so rare—
These bir s—all, all, his ardent flame declare!
When 'neath a mountain cat's fierce talons fell
Monette, the beauteous ape he loved so well,

[1] The name generally given to a dressed-up monkey, "Singe habillé."

[2] Canons, or canions, were rows or rolls of ribbons at the knees of the breeches worn in the days of Henry III. of France, and our Elizabeth; the name appears afterwards to have been transmitted to the lace frills that were worn below the knee, temp Louis XIV.—See Molière's "Les Précieuses Ridicules," scene x.

And who alone could be compared to you;
When to her spouse she bade a last adieu,
The king a hundred times swore by her shade,
That love should never more his heart invade.
Madam, your charms have from that heart effaced
The tender image his first love had traced.
Of you alone he thinks. If you but knew
The state of frenzy he is driven to,
To pity surely moved, your gentle breast
Would share his pain, and so restore his rest.
He whom we saw of late so fat, so gay,
Now worn to skin and bone, a constant prey
To a consuming care nought can remove.
Madam, he knows too well what 'tis to love!
Olives and nuts, his favourite food of yore,
Insipid seem—are relish'd now no more.
He dies; your help alone we come to crave—
'Tis you alone can snatch him from the grave.
I scorn to tempt you by the grosser bait
Of the choice fare within our happy state,
Where grapes and figs are in profusion found,
And all the finest fruit the whole year round."

Perroquet had scarcely finished his oration when the queen turned her eyes on Babiole, who felt more disconcerted than anybody had ever been before. The queen wished to ascertain her sentiments before she replied. She told the parrot to make his excellency the ambassador understand that she favoured the king's pretensions as far as it depended on herself. The audience over, she retired, and Babiole followed her into her closet. "My little ape," said the queen to her, "I acknowledge that I shall regret thy absence, but there is no way of refusing Magot, who asks thy hand in marriage, for I have not yet forgotten that his father brought two hundred thousand monkeys into the field against me, and they ate so many of my subjects that we were obliged to agree to a shameful peace." "That means, then, madam," replied Babiole impatiently, "that you are resolved to sacrifice me to this horrid monster to avoid his anger; but I supplicate your majesty at least to grant me a few days to make up my mind finally." "That is but just," said the queen; "nevertheless, if you will take my advice, decide promptly; consider the honours prepared for thee, the magnificence of the embassy, and what maids of honour he sends thee. I am sure that Magot never did for Monette what he has done for thee." "I do not know what he has done for Monette," said little Babiole indignantly, "but I know well that I am not greatly touched by the sentiments with which he honours me." She rose instantly, and with a graceful courtesy went to search for the prince, to tell him her troubles. As soon as he saw her, he exclaimed, "Well, Babiole, when are we to dance at your wedding?" "I do not know, sir," said she sadly; "but the deplorable state I am in renders me incapable of keeping my own secrets, and however my delicacy may suffer, I must own to you that you are the only person I could take for a husband." "Me!" said the prince, bursting into a loud laugh, "for a husband! My little ape, I am charmed at what you tell me, yet I hope you will pardon me if I do not accept your proposal, for, in short, our figures, tastes, and manners are not quite suitable." "I agree

with you," she said, "and our hearts also are unlike; you are an ingrate; for a long time I have suspected it, and I am very foolish to feel an affection for a prince who so little deserves it."

"But, Babiole, think of the misery with which I should see you perched on the top of a sycamore, holding on to a branch by your tail. Take my advice! laugh at this affair, for your honour and mine. Marry King Magot, and for old friendship's sake, send me your first little monkey." "It is well for you, my lord," added Babiole, "that I have not exactly the disposition of an ape; any other than I would have already scratched out your eyes, bitten off your nose, and torn off your ears, but I abandon you to the reflections that you will one day make on your unworthy conduct." She could say no more, for her governess came to fetch her, the ambassador, Mirlifiche, having taken to her apartments some magnificent presents. There was a toilet composed of a spider's web embroidered with little glowworms; an egg-shell held the combs, and a white-heart cherry served for a pin-cushion, all the linen being trimmed with lace paper. There were besides in a basket several shells neatly arranged; some to serve for earrings, others for bodkins, and all brilliant as diamonds; and what was much better, there were a dozen boxes filled with comfits, and a little glass coffer, containing a nut and an olive, but the key was lost. Babiole, however, cared little about it. The ambassador informed her in a grumbling tone, the language used in Magotia, that his king was more touched by her charms than by those of any monkey he had ever seen in his life; that he had had a palace built for her in the top of a fir-tree; that he had sent her these presents and also some excellent sweetmeats, as a mark of his attachment, so that the king, his master, could not better testify his affection. "But," continued he, "the strongest proof of his tenderness, and the one of which you ought to be the most sensible, is, madam, the care he has taken to have his portrait painted as a foretaste of the pleasure you will have in seeing him." He thereupon displayed the portrait of the king of the monkeys, seated on a great log of wood, and eating an apple.

Babiole turned her eyes away, that they might not be longer offended by such a disagreeable figure, and grumbling three or four times she made Mirlifiche understand that she was obliged to his master for his esteem, but that she had not yet determined whether she should marry or not.

Meantime the queen had resolved not to draw on herself the anger of the monkeys, and not thinking it necessary to stand on much ceremony in sending Babiole where she chose her to go, prepared everything for her departure. At this news despair took complete possession of poor Babiole's heart; the contempt of the prince on one hand, the indifference of the queen on the other, and more than all, such a husband. made her resolve to fly. It was not a very difficult matter; since she had spoken they no longer tied her up; she went out and came in and entered her room as often by the window as by the door. She hurried, therefore, away, jumping from tree to tree, from branch to branch, till she came to the banks of a river. The excess of her despair prevented her

from comprehending the peril she should incur by attempting to swim across, and without pausing even to look at it, she flung herself in, and immediately went to the bottom; but as she did not lose her senses, she perceived a magnificent grotto, ornamented with shells. She entered it quickly, and was received by a very old man, whose long white beard descended to his waist: he was reclining on a couch of reeds and flags, and was crowned with poppies and wild lilies, and was leaning against a rock, out of which flowed several fountains which fed the river. "Ah! what brings thee here, little Babiole?" said he, holding out his hand to her. "My lord," she replied, "I am an unfortunate ape! I am flying from a horrible monkey, whom they want me to marry." "I know more of thy history than thou thinkest," added the wise old man; "it is true thou dost abhor Magot, but it is no less true that thou lovest a young prince, who treats thee with indifference." "Ah, sir," cried Babiole, sighing, "do not speak of it; the thought of him augments all my woes." "He will not always be a rebel to love," continued the guest of the fishes; "I know he is reserved for the most beautiful princess in the world." "Unfortunate that I am," continued Babiole, "he then can never be mine." The good man smiled, and said to her, "Do not distress thyself, my good Babiole, time is a great master; only take care not to lose the little glass coffer which Magot sent thee, and which by chance thou hast in thy pocket. I cannot say more to thee on the subject: here is a tortoise who goes a very good pace; seat thyself on him, and he will conduct thee whither thou shouldst go." "After all the obligations you have conferred on me," said Babiole, "I cannot leave you without inquiring your name." "They call me Biroquoi," he said, "father of Biroquie—a river, as you see, large enough and famous enough." Babiole mounted the tortoise with perfect confidence; they travelled for some time on the water, and at last, after what appeared a long round, the tortoise gained the bank.

It would be difficult to find anything more noble-looking than the English saddle and the rest of the harness of the tortoise, complete even to the little pistols in the saddle bow, the pockets of which were made of two bodies of crabs.

Babiole travelled on, entirely confiding in the promises of Biroquoi, when on a sudden she heard a rather loud noise; alas! alas! it was the ambassador Mirlifiche, with all his followers, who were returning to Magotia, sad and afflicted at the flight of Babiole. A monkey of the troop had climbed a walnut-tree at dinner time, to knock down the nuts to feed the Magotins; but he had hardly reached the top of the tree when, looking about him, he saw Babiole on the poor tortoise, who was travelling slowly in the open country. At this sight he began to scream so loud that the assembled monkeys asked him in their language what was the matter; he told them, and they immediately let loose the parrots, pies, and jays, who flew to the spot and identified her, and on their report that it really was Babiole, the ambassador, the apes and the rest of the party ran after and seized her.

What a misfortune for Babiole! It would be difficult to have met with a greater or more grievous one. They made her enter the state coach, which was immediately sur-

rounded by the most vigilant apes, some foxes, and a cock, the latter of whom mounted on the imperial and stood sentinel day and night. A monkey led the tortoise as a rare animal, and thus the cavalcade continued its journey, to the great distress of Babiole, who had no other companion than Madam Gigona, a sour-tempered and ill-natured ape.

At the end of three days, during which nothing particular occurred, the guides having missed their way, the cavalcade arrived at a large and beautiful city totally unknown to them, but perceiving a beautiful garden, the gate of which was open, they entered and ravaged it as if it was a conquered country. One cracked nuts, another swallowed cherries, a third stripped a plum-tree; in short, down to the smallest monkey in the train, there was not one that did not go plundering and pocketing.

Now you must know that this city was the capital of the kingdom in which Babiole was born, that the queen her mother resided in it, and that ever since she had the misfortune to see her daughter changed into an ape by the sprig of hawthorn, she had never suffered in her dominions any ape, monkey, baboon, or anything in fact that could recall the fatal circumstance to her mind. A monkey was looked upon there as a disturber of the public peace. What, then, was the astonishment of the people at the arrival of a card coach, a chariot of painted straw, and all the rest of the most extraordinary equipage that has ever been seen since stories were stories, and fairies fairies.

The news flew to the palace. The queen was appalled; she imagined that the monkey people had designs against her throne. She called a council immediately, and the whole of the intruders were pronounced guilty of high treason: determined, therefore, to make such an example of them as should be a warning to all for the future, she sent her guards into the garden with orders to seize all the monkeys. They threw large nets over the trees; the hunt was soon over, and notwithstanding the respect due to the quality of an ambassador, the character was sadly outraged in the person of Mirlifiche, whom they consigned without the least remorse to the depths of a dungeon, in which he was placed under a large empty puncheon with the rest of his comrades, together with the lady apes and miss monkeys who accompanied Babiole. Babiole herself experienced a secret gratification in this new misfortune. When unhappiness attains a certain point, nothing further alarms us, and even death, perhaps, is looked forward to as a boon. Such was her situation—her heart, tortured by the recollection of the prince, who had despised her, and her mind by the frightful image of King Magot, whose wife she was about to become.

Now we must not forget to say that her dress was so pretty and her manners so superior that those who had made her prisoner could not help considering her something wonderful, and when she spoke their surprise was still greater. They had often heard mention of the admirable Babiole. The queen, who had found her, and was ignorant of the transformation of her niece, had frequently written to her sister that she had a wonderful ape, and begged her to come and see it; but the afflicted mother always skipped

such passages in her letters. At length the guards, in ecstasies of delight, carried Babiole into a great gallery where they erected a little throne, on which she seated herself with the air of a sovereign more than that of a captive ape, and the queen happening to pass through the gallery, was so struck with surprise at her pretty mien and the graceful salutation she made her, that, despite herself, nature spoke in favour of the infanta.

The queen took Babiole in her arms. The little creature, herself agitated by feelings till then unknown to her, threw herself on the queen's neck, and said to her such tender and winning things, that all those who heard her were full of admiration. "No, madam," she said, "it is not the fear of approaching death (with which I am told you threaten the unfortunate race of monkeys) that induces me to seek means to please and propitiate you; the termination of my existence is not the greatest misfortune that can befall me, and my feelings are so far above the thing I am, that I should regret the least step that might be taken to save me. It is for yourself alone that I love you, madam; your crown affects me much less than your merits."

Now what reply, in your opinion, could anybody make to so polite and respectful a Babiole? The queen, as mute as a fish, opened her two great eyes, imagined she was dreaming, and felt her heart excessively agitated. She carried Babiole into her cabinet. When they were alone she said to her, "Delay not a moment the relation to me of thy adventures, for I feel satisfied that of all the animals that stock my menageries, and that I keep in my palace, I shall love thee the best. I promise thee even, that for thy sake I will pardon the monkeys that accompany thee." "Ah! madam," said Babiole, "I do not intercede for them. It has been my misfortune to be born an ape, and the same cruel fate has given me an understanding which will be my torment as long as I live; for what must I feel when I see myself in a looking-glass, a little ugly black creature; with paws covered with hair, a tail, and teeth always ready to bite, and at the same time know that I am not without intelligence, that I possess some taste, refinement, and feeling." "Art thou susceptible of love?" asked the queen. Babiole sighed without replying. "Oh!" continued the queen. "I pray thee tell me if thou lovest a monkey, a rabbit, or a squirrel, for if thou art not positively engaged, I have a dwarf who would be the very husband for thee." Babiole at this proposition assumed an air of indignation, which made the queen burst out laughing. "Don't be angry," said she, "and tell me by what chance it is that thou hast the power of speech." "All that I know of my history," said Babiole, "is that the queen, your sister, had scarcely left you after the birth and death of the princess your daughter, than she saw, on the sea-shore, one of your valets-de-chambre, who was about to drown me. I was snatched from his grasp by her orders, and by a miracle which astonished everybody I found myself possessed of the power of speech and reason. Masters were given to me to teach me several languages, and how to play on various instruments; at length, madam, I became aware of my misfortune, and——but what is the matter, madam?" cried she, observing the queen's face perfectly

pallid, and covered with cold perspiration. "I perceive an extraordinary change in your countenance." "I am dying," said the queen in a feeble voice and scarcely able to articulate. "I am dying, my dear and too unhappy child! Ah! have I then found thee to-day?" As she uttered these words she fainted. Babiole, much alarmed, ran to call for help. The ladies in waiting on the queen hastened to give her some water, to unlace her, and put her to bed. Babiole smuggled herself into bed with her. No one noticed it, she was so very little.

When the queen recovered from the long swoon into which the princess's account of herself had thrown her, she desired to be left alone with the ladies who knew the secret of the fatal birth of her daughter. She told them what had occurred; at which they were so amazed that they knew not what advice to give her.

She commanded them, however, to say what they thought it would be best to do in so bad a conjuncture. Some suggested that the ape should be smothered, others were for shutting it up in some hole, and a third party proposed sending it again to be drowned in the sea. The queen wept and sobbed, and said, "She has so much good sense, what a pity to see her reduced by a magic bouquet to this miserable condition. But after all," she continued, "it is my child. It is I who have drawn down upon her the wrath of the wicked Fanferluche; is it just she should suffer for the hate that fairy bears to me?"

"Yet, madam," said her old maid of honour, "you must protect your own fame. What would the world think of you if you declared yourself the mother of a monkey infanta? It is not natural for one so handsome as you are to have such children."

The queen lost all patience at such reasoning, whilst the old lady and the others all insisted with equal warmth that the little monster ought to be exterminated. Finally, the queen determined to have Babiole locked up in a château, where she could be well fed and well treated for the rest of her days.

When the princess heard the queen express her resolution to put her in prison, she slipped quietly out at the side of the bed, and leaping from a window on to a tree in the garden, escaped into the great forest, and left everybody wondering what had become of her.

She passed the night in the hollow of an oak, where she had time to moralise on the cruelty of her destiny; but what gave her the most pain was the necessity she was under of quitting the queen. Still she preferred a voluntary exile which left her the enjoyment of her liberty, to remaining a captive for ever.

As soon as it was light she continued her journey, without knowing where to go, turning in her mind over and over again a thousand times, this strange, this most extraordinary adventure. "What a difference," she exclaimed, "between that which I am, and that which I ought to have been!" The tears flowed fast from the little eyes of Babiole.

Every morning at daybreak she resumed her flight. She feared the queen would have her pursued, or that some of the monkeys, escaped from the cellar, would seize and

carry her against her will to King Magot. She fled so far without following road or track, that at length she came to a great desert, in which was to be found nor house nor tree, nor fruit, nor herb, nor fountain. She entered upon it without reflection, and when she became hungry, she discovered, but too late, how imprudent it was to travel through such a country.

Two nights and two days elapsed without her being able to catch even a worm or a gnat. The fear of death came over her. She was so weak that she felt fainting. She stretched herself on the ground, and recollecting the olive and the nut that were still in the little glass box, she thought she might make on them a slender meal. Encouraged by this ray of hope she took up a stone, broke the box to pieces, and began to eat the olive.

But scarcely had she bitten it when out ran a flood of fragrant oil, which falling on her paws they became the most beautiful hands in the world. Her surprise was extreme. She took some of the oil in her hands, and rubbed herself all over with it. A miracle! She made herself so beautiful that nothing in the universe could be compared to her. She felt she had large eyes, a small mouth, a handsome nose—she was dying to see herself in a glass; at last it occurred to her to make one out of the largest piece of her broken box. Oh, when she saw herself, what delight! What an agreeable surprise! Her clothes had enlarged with herself. Her head was well formed, her hair was in a thousand curls; her complexion was as blooming as the flowers of spring.

The first moments of her surprise over, the cravings of hunger became more urgent, and her distress on that score greatly increased. "Ah," said she, "so young and handsome, a princess born as I am, must I perish in this sad spot? Oh, cruel fortune that has brought me hither, what hast thou in store for me? Is it to heap more affliction upon me that thou hast effected this charming and unhoped-for change in my person? And thou, too, venerable river Biroquoi, who so generously saved my life, wilt thou leave me to perish in this frightful desert?"

The infanta vainly cried for help. Every power was deaf to her voice, and the torments of hunger increased to such a degree that she took the nut and cracked it: but as she flung away the shell, she was greatly astonished to see coming out of it, architects, painters, masons, upholsterers, sculptors, and workmen in a thousand other crafts. Some drew plans of a palace, others built it, others furnished it. These painted the apartments, those laid out the gardens. Blue and gold met the eye in every direction. A magnificent repast was served up: sixty princesses dressed finer than queens, led by squires, and followed by their pages, came and paid her the highest compliments, and invited her to the banquet which awaited her. Babiole immediately, without waiting to be pressed, entered the saloon, and with the air of a queen ate as a starving person might be expected to eat.

She had scarcely risen from table, when her treasurers placed before her fifteen thousand chests as big as hogsheads, filled with gold and diamonds. They inquired if it was her pleasure that they should pay the workmen who had built her palace. She

answered that it was proper to do so; but bargained that they should also build a city, marry, and remain in her service. They all consented, and the city was built in three quarters of an hour, although it was five times larger than Rome. Here was a number of prodigies to come out of a little nut!

The princess resolved to send a grand embassy to the queen, her mother, and to convey some reproaches to the young prince her cousin. Whilst the requisite preparations were being made, she amused herself with watching runnings at the ring, at which she always distributed the prizes; also with cards, plays, hunting, and fishing; for they had brought a river through the palace gardens.

The report of Babiole's beauty spread throughout the universe, and kings came to her court from the four corners of the earth—giants taller than mountains and pigmies smaller than rats.

It happened one day, during a grand tournament, after several knights had broken their lances, a quarrel arose between them, and they fought in earnest and wounded each other. The princess, greatly offended by this conduct in her presence, descended from her balcony to ascertain who were the guilty parties; but when they were unhelmed, what were her feelings when she recognised in one of them the prince her cousin! If not dead, he was so nearly gone that she was herself ready to die of grief and alarm at the sight. She had him carried into the handsomest room in the palace, where nothing was wanting that could be necessary for his recovery—physicians from Chodrai,[1] surgeons, ointments, broths, syrups. The infanta herself made the bandages and prepared the lint. They were watered with her tears, and those tears should alone have been a balsam to the wounded prince. They were so indeed in more ways than one, for not counting half-a-dozen sword-cuts, and as many lance-thrusts, which had pierced him through and through, he had long been at the court, incognito, and had been wounded by the bright eyes of Babiole so desperately, that he was incurable for life. It is easy, therefore, to imagine at present some portion of what he felt, when he was able to read in the countenance of that beautiful princess, that she was in the utmost grief at beholding the condition to which he was reduced.

I shall not stop to repeat all that his heart prompted him to say in thanking her for the kindness she had shown him. Those who heard him were astonished that a man so very ill could express himself with so much warmth and gratitude. The infanta, who blushed more than once at his words, begged him to be silent, but his agitation and ardour carried him so far, that she saw him suddenly fall into an alarming agony. Up to this time she had evinced great fortitude, but now she lost it so completely that she tore her hair, uttered wild shrieks, and gave her people reason to believe that her heart was vastly susceptible, since she could in so short a time be so desperately in love with an utter stranger—for little did they know in Babiola (she had so named

[1] There is no Chodrai to be found in the "Dictionnaire Universel Géographique de la France," 5 vols. 1804. Chaudray near Mantes, and Chaudrey on the Aube, are small towns which do not appear to have been distinguished in the annals of medicine.

her kingdom), that the prince was her cousin, and that she had loved him from her earliest infancy.

It was during his travels that he had arrived at this court, and as there was no one he knew to present him to the infanta, he thought that nothing could be better than performing five or six heroic actions before her, that is to say, cutting off the arms or legs of some of the knights in the lists ; but he found none polite enough to permit him to do so. There was consequently a furious general combat ; the strongest overthrew the weakest, and the weakest, as I have before told you, was the prince.

Babiole, in a state of distraction, ran out on the high road without coach or guards. She plunged into a wood, and fainted away at the foot of a tree. The fairy, Fanferluche, who never slept, and was always on the watch for opportunities to do mischief, came and carried her off in a cloud blacker than ink, and which flew faster than the wind.

The princess remained for some time perfectly unconscious. At length she came to herself. Never was surprise equal to hers, at finding herself so far from the ground and so near to the pole. The floor of a cloud is not solid, so that as she ran here and there it seemed to her that she was treading on feathers ; and the cloud opening a little she had a narrow escape of falling through. She found no one to complain to, for the wicked Fanferluche had made herself invisible. Babiole had leisure to think of her dear prince, and the condition in which she had left him, and she gave herself up to the most poignant grief that could possess a living soul. "How!" exclaimed she, "am I yet capable of surviving him I love ; and can the fear of approaching death find a place in my heart? Oh, if the sun would roast me he would do me a kindness ; or if I could drown myself in the rainbow, how happy I should be! but, alas, the whole zodiac is deaf to my voice : the sagittary has no darts, the bull no horns, the lion no teeth. Perhaps the earth will be more obliging, and offer me the sharp point of some rock on which I may kill myself. O prince, my dear cousin! why are you not here to see me make the most tragic leap that a despairing lover could think of!" As she uttered these words she rushed to the end of the cloud, and sprang from it with the force of an arrow from a bow.

All who saw her thought it was the moon falling ; and as it was then in the wane, many who adored it, and who remained for some time without seeing it, went into deep mourning, and were convinced that the sun out of jealousy had played it this wicked trick.

Much as the infanta desired to kill herself she did not succeed. She fell into the glass-bottle in which the fairies usually keep their ratafia in the sun. But what a bottle! There is not a tower in the world so large. Fortunately it was empty, or she would have been drowned in it like a fly. The bottle was guarded by six giants. They recognised the infanta immediately. They were the same giants who had been residing at her court, and who were in love with her. The malignant Fanferluche, who did nothing without calculation, had transported them thither each on a flying dragon, and these dragons guarded the bottle when the giants slept. Many a day during the time

Babiole was in the bottle did she regret her monkey's skin. She lived like the chameleons on air and dew. The place of her imprisonment was known to none. The young prince was ignorant of it. He was not dead, and was continually inquiring for Babiole. He saw plainly enough by the melancholy of all his attendants, that a general feeling of sorrow pervaded the court upon some subject which his natural discretion prevented him from attempting to discover; but as soon as he was convalescent, he intreated them so earnestly to give him some tidings of the princess, that they had not the courage to conceal her loss from him. Some who had seen her enter the wood maintained that she had been devoured by the lions; while others believed she had destroyed herself in a fit of despair. Others, again, imagined she had gone out of her mind, and was wandering about the world.

As the last notion was the least dreadful, and kept up in a slight degree the hopes of the prince, he adopted it, and departed on Criquetin, the horse I have before mentioned; but I omitted to say that he was the eldest son of Bucephalus, and one of the best horses of the age. The prince let the bridle fall on his neck, and suffered him to take his own road. He called loudly on the infanta, but the echoes alone replied to him.

At length he came to the banks of a large river; Criquetin was thirsty and went in to drink, and the prince, as before, shouted, "Babiole, lovely Babiole! where art thou?"

He heard a voice, the sweetness of which seemed to charm the waters. This voice said to him, "Advance, and you shall learn where she is." At these words the prince, whose courage was equal to his love, clapped both his spurs into the sides of Criquetin. He plunged into the river and swam till he came to a whirlpool, into which the waves were sucked rapidly. They went down in it, horse and man, and the prince made sure he should be drowned.

He arrived, however, fortunately, at the abode of the worthy Biroquoi, who was celebrating the marriage of his daughter with one of the richest and deepest rivers in the country. All the aquatic deities were assembled in the grotto. The tritons and the sirens performed the most agreeable music, and the River Biroquie, lightly attired, danced the Hay[1] with the Seine, the Thames, the Euphrates, and the Ganges, who had certainly come a long way to be merry together.

Criquetin, who knew good manners, halted very respectfully at the entrance of the grotto, and the prince, who knew better manners even than his horse, making a profound bow, inquired if a mortal like himself might be permitted to make his appearance in so splendid a party.

Biroquoi replied, in an affable tone, that he did them both honour and pleasure. "I have expected you for some days, my lord," continued he; "I am interested in your fate, and that of the infanta who is dear to me. You must release her from the fatal spot in which the vindictive Fanferluche has imprisoned her. It is in a bottle." "Ah,

[1] "Les Olivettes." A dance, the figure of which was formed by couples turning hand-in-hand after each other, round three fixed points. It was called the Hay in England.

what do I hear!" cried the prince; "the infanta is in a bottle?" "Yes," said the sage old man; "she suffers much: but I warn you, my lord, that it is not easy to conquer the giants and the dragons that guard it, unless you follow my counsels. You must leave your good steed here, and mount on a winged dolphin that I have for some time been breaking in for you." He had the dolphin brought out, saddled and bridled, who vaulted and curveted so cleverly that Criquetin was jealous of him.

Biroquoi and his friends made haste to arm the prince. They gave him a brilliant cuirass of the scales of golden carps, and placed on his head the shell of a huge snail, which was overshadowed with the tail of a large cod, raised in the form of an aigrette; a naiad girt him with an eel, from which depended a tremendous sword made out of a long fish-bone, and lastly they gave him the shell of a great tortoise for a shield; and thus armed, there was not the smallest gudgeon that did not take him to be the god of soles, for to speak the truth, this young prince had a certain air which is rarely met with in mortals.

The hope of soon recovering the charming princess he adored inspired him with a joy he had not experienced since her loss, and the faithful chronicle of these events asserts that he ate with an excellent appetite whilst he was staying with Biroquoi, and that he thanked him and all the company with extraordinary eloquence. He then bade adieu to Criquetin, and mounted the flying dolphin, who set off with him immediately. The prince, towards evening, found himself at such a height, that for the sake of a little rest he entered the kingdom of the moon. The curiosities he saw there would have detained him for some time had he been less anxious to extricate his beloved infanta from the bottle in which she had been living for several months.

Morning had scarcely dawned when he discovered her surrounded by giants and dragons, which the fairy, by the power of her little wand, had kept beside her. She so little imagined that any one would have power to rescue the princess, that she felt perfectly satisfied with the vigilance of her terrible guards, and their ability to prolong the sufferings of Babiole.

That beautiful princess had raised her mournful eyes to heaven, and was addressing to it her sad complaints, when she saw the flying dolphin and the knight who came to her deliverance. She had not believed in the possibility of such an event, although her own experience had taught her that the most extraordinary things become familiar to certain persons. "Is it by the malice of some fairies," said she, "that yon knight is borne through the air? Alas! how I pity him if, like me, he is doomed to be imprisoned in some bottle or flagon."

Whilst she thus ruminated, the giants, who saw the prince hovering above their heads, thought it was a boy's kite, and cried one to the other, "Catch hold, catch hold of the line! It will amuse us;" but while they were stooping to look for the line, the prince rushed down upon them, sword in hand, cut them in pieces as you would cut a pack of cards, and scattered them to the winds.

At the noise of this desperate combat the infanta looked round, and recognised her

young prince. What joy, to be assured he was alive! But what terror to see the imminent peril he was in amongst those horrible giants and the dragons that were springing upon him. She uttered fearful shrieks, and was ready to die at the sight of his danger.

But the enchanted bone with which Biroquoi had armed the prince never struck in vain, and the light dolphin flying up or down with him at exactly the right moment was also of wonderful assistance to him; so that in a very short time the ground was covered with the bodies of these monsters.

The impatient prince, who saw his infanta through the glass, would have dashed the bottle to pieces had he not been afraid of wounding her. He decided, therefore, to descend through the neck of it. When he reached the bottom of the bottle, he flung himself at the feet of Babiole, and respectfully kissed her hand. "My lord," said she, "it is necessary, in order to retain your good opinion, that I should give you my reasons for the tender interest I took in your preservation. Know that we are near relations; that I am the daughter of the queen, your aunt, and that very Babiole whom you found in the form of an ape on the sea-shore, and who afterwards had the weakness to evince an attachment for you which you despised." "Ah, madam," said the prince, "can I believe so miraculous a circumstance? You have been an ape, you have loved me, I have been aware of it, and was capable of rejecting the greatest of all blessings!" "I should at this moment have a very bad opinion of your taste," replied the infanta smiling, "if you could then have felt any affection for me. But let us away, my lord; I am weary of captivity, and I fear my enemy. Let us seek the queen, my mother, and tell her all the extraordinary things in which she must be so much interested." "Come, madam, let us go," said the enamoured prince, mounting the winged dolphin, and taking Babiole in his arms; "let me hasten to restore to her in your person the most lovely princess that the world ever boasted."

The dolphin rose gently into the air and took his flight towards the capital, where the queen passed her melancholy life. The disappearance of Babiole had deprived her of repose. She could not cease thinking of her, of the pretty speeches she had made, and, all ape as she was, the queen would have given half her kingdom to see her once more. As soon as the prince arrived he assumed the disguise of an old man, and requested a private audience of her majesty. "Madam," said he to her, "I have studied from my earliest youth the art of necromancy: you may judge from that fact that I am not ignorant of the hatred Fanferluche bears you, and its terrible consequences; but dry your tears, madam; that Babiole, whom you have seen so ugly, is now the most beautiful princess in the world. She will shortly be beside you, if you will forgive the queen your sister, the cruel war she has made upon you, and cement the peace by the marriage of your infanta with the prince your nephew." "I cannot flatter myself with such hopes," replied the queen weeping: "you wish to allay my sorrow, sage old man, but I have lost my dear child, I have no longer a husband, my sister pretends to my kingdom, her son is equally unjust towards me, and I will never seek their alliance." "Destiny has ordained otherwise," said the prince. "I am commissioned to inform you so." "Alas!"

added the queen, "where would be the advantage of my consenting to their marriage? The wicked Fanferluche has too much power and malice. She would oppose it always." "Make yourself easy on that score, madam," repiled the old man; promise me only that you will not object to the match so much desired." "I will promise anything," said the queen, "on condition that I once again behold my dear daughter."

The prince retired and ran to the spot where the infanta was awaiting him. She was surprised to see him disguised, and he was, therefore, compelled to explain to her that for some time past there had been a confliction of interests between the two queens, which had caused considerable bitterness; but that he had at length induced his aunt to consent to his wishes. The princess was delighted: she repaired to the palace. All who saw her pass were so struck by her perfect resemblance to her mother that they hastened after her to ascertain who she could be.

As soon as the queen saw her, her heart was so greatly agitated that she needed no other proof of the truth of the story. The princess flung herself at the queen's feet, and was raised by her into her arms; where, after remaining for some time without speaking, and kissing away each other's tears, they gave utterance to all that can be imagined on such an occasion. The queen, then, casting her eyes on her nephew, received him very graciously, and repeated to him the promise she had made to the necromancer. She would have said more, but the noise that she heard in the court-yard of the palace induced her to look out of the window, and she had the agreeable surprise of beholding the arrival of the queen her sister. The prince and the infanta, who were looking out also, perceived in the royal suite the venerable Biroquoi, and even good Criquetin was one of the party. All at the sight of each other uttered shouts of joy; they ran to meet each other with transports which cannot be described, and the magnificent nuptials of the prince and the infanta were celebrated upon the spot in spite of the fairy, Fanferluche, whose power and malignity were equally confounded.

"The friendship of the wicked we should fear,
Their fairest offers prudently declining;
E'en while protesting that they hold us dear,
In secret oft our peace they're undermining.

"The princess, whose adventures I've related,
Of happiness might ne'er have been bereaved,
If, from the fairy who her mother hated,
The fatal hawthorn had not been received.

"Her transformation to an ugly ape
Could not exempt her from the tender passion;
Regardless of her features and her shape,
She dared to love a prince—'the glass of fashion.'

"I know some well, in this our present day,
Ugly as any monkeys in creation,
Who, notwithstanding, venture siege to lay
To the most noble hearts in all the nation.[1]

"But I suspect, ere they secure a lover,
They must to some enchanter pay their duty,
Who can inform them where they may discover
The oil which gave to Babiole her beauty."

[1] We have no clue to the exact dates at which these stories were written, but about this period Mdlle. Choin, whom St. Simon describes as "a fat, squat, swarthy, ugly, flat-nosed girl," contrived to acquire an ascendency over the heart of Monseigneur le Dauphin, son of Louis XIV., and father of Philip V. king of Spain. The allusion may have been more general, but the notoriety of this intrigue, which became the theme of the ballad mongers of the day, renders the supposition not improbable, that this celebrated intrigante was at least included in the category.

# THE YELLOW DWARF

ONCE upon a time there was a queen who had only one daughter left out of a very large family, but that one was worth a thousand. Finding herself a widow, and having nothing in the world so dear to her as the young princess, she was so much afraid of losing her that she never corrected any of her faults; so that this marvellous creature, perceiving that her beauty was celestial rather than mortal, and knowing that she was born to a crown, became so proud and so vain of her nascent charms that she despised everybody.

The queen, her mother, by her caresses and indulgence, confirmed her in the belief that there was nothing in the world which could be worthy of her. She appeared nearly always dressed as Pallas or Diana, followed by the principal ladies of the court attired as nymphs; and finally, to pamper her vanity to the utmost, the queen gave her the name of Toutebelle: and having had her portrait painted by the best artists, sent it to several kings, with whom she was in strict alliance. As soon as they saw this portrait, every one, without an exception, yielded to the inevitable power of her charms. Some fell ill, others lost their wits, and those who were fortunate enough to preserve their health and senses hastened to her court. But no sooner did they behold the fair original, than the poor princes became her devoted slaves.

There never was a court more gallant and polite. Twenty kings vied with each other in their endeavours to please the princess; and after having spent three or four hundred millions of francs upon a single entertainment, would feel more than repaid if they could only draw from her an admission that "It was pretty."

The worship that was paid to her delighted the queen. Not a day passed that the princess did not receive seven or eight thousand sonnets, as many odes, madrigals, and songs, which were sent by all the poets in the universe. Toutebelle was the sole theme of all the prose and verse written by the authors of her time. All the bonfires were made with these compositions, which sparkled and burned better than any other sort of fuel. The princess had already reached the age of fifteen. Nobody ventured to pretend to the honour of being her husband, though everybody desired it: but how was it possible to touch a heart of that description? You might have hanged yourself five or six times a day to please her, and she would have thought it a mere trifle. Her lovers complained bitterly of her cruelty, and her mother, who wished her to be

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I know you well, queen, and I know the fear you are in.

married, saw no means of inducing her to decide in favour of one of them. "Will you not," said she sometimes to her, "abate a little of that insupportable pride which causes you to look with disdain upon all the kings who visit our court? I wish to give you one for a husband. Have you no desire to please me?" "I am so happy," replied Toutebelle. "Pray, permit me, madam, to enjoy my peaceful indifference. If I were once to lose it, you might be very sorry." "Yes," said the queen, "I should be sorry if you loved any one beneath you; but look at those who sigh for you, and admit that there are none to be found more worthy."

It was quite true, but the princess had such an opinion of her own perfections that she considered herself worth some one better still; and after some time, her obstinate determination to remain single so distressed her mother that she repented, but too late, her extreme indulgence. Not knowing what she ought to do, she went by herself to consult a celebrated fairy called the fairy of the desert: but it was not easy to see her, for she was guarded by lions. The queen would have had little chance if she had not been for a long time aware that it was necessary to throw to these beasts some cake made of millet-seed, sugar-candy, and crocodiles' eggs. She had made one of these cakes herself, and put it into a little hand-basket. As she was tired with walking so far, not being accustomed to it, she lay down at the foot of a tree to take a little rest. Insensibly she fell asleep, but on re-awaking she found her basket empty. The cake was gone! and to complete the misfortune, she heard the great lions coming, roaring tremendously, for they had smelt her.

"Alas, what will become of me!" she exclaimed piteously, "I shall be devoured!" She wept, and not having strength to fly, she clung to the tree under which she had slept. At that moment she heard, "Hist! Hist! A-hem! A-hem!" She looked all about her, and raising her eyes, she saw up in the tree a little man not above a cubit in height. He was eating oranges, and said to her, "Oh! I know you well, queen, and I know the fear you are in that the lions will devour you; and not without reason are you alarmed, for they have devoured many before you, and to complete your misfortune you have no cake."

"I must submit to die!" said the queen sighing. "Alas, I should do so with less pain if my dear daughter were but married!" "How? You have a daughter!" exclaimed the yellow dwarf. (He was so called from the colour of his skin, and his living in an orange-tree.) "Truly, I am delighted to hear it, for I have sought a wife by land and sea. Look now, if you will promise her to me, I will save you from lions, tigers, or bears." The queen looked at him, and she was scarcely less frightened at his horrible little figure than she was at the lions. She mused, and made no answer. "What! do you hesitate, madam?" cried he. "You cannot be very fond of life." At the same moment the queen perceived the lions on the brow of a hill running towards her. Each had two heads, eight feet, four rows of teeth, and their skin was as hard as shell, and as red as morocco. At this sight, the poor queen, trembling more than a dove at the

view of a falcon, cried out with all her might, "My lord dwarf! Toutebelle is yours." "Oh!" said he, with a disdainful air, "Toutebelle is too much of a belle;[1] I will have none of her. You may keep her." "Ah, my lord, continued the afflicted queen, "do not refuse her! She is the most charming princess in the world!" "Well," said he, "out of charity I accept her: but recollect the gift you have made me!" The trunk of the orange-tree, in which he was seated, immediately opened. The queen rushed headlong into it; it closed, and the lions were balked of their prey.

The queen was so agitated that she did not notice a door constructed in the tree. At length she perceived it, and opened it: it opened on a field of nettles and thistles surrounded by a muddy ditch. At a little distance stood a very low-roofed cottage, thatched with straw, the yellow dwarf came out of it with a mirthful air. He wore wooden shoes, and a jacket of coarse yellow cloth; had large ears, and no hair, and looked liked a thorough little villain. "I am delighted, my lady mother-in-law," said he, "to show you the little château in which your Toutebelle will reside with me. She may keep an ass upon these nettles and thistles to ride about on. This rustic roof will shelter her from the inclemency of the weather; she will drink this water and eat some of the frogs that fatten in it; and she will have me day and night beside her, handsome, gay, and gallant, as you see me, for I should be very sorry if her shadow followed her closer than I."

The unfortunate queen, suddenly struck by the wretched life the dwarf had allotted to her dear daughter, and being unable to support so terrible a picture, dropped insensible to the ground, without being able to utter a word in reply to him, but while she was in this state she was transported to the palace, placed in her own bed, very neatly, with the finest night-cap and the handsomest fontange[2] that she had ever worn in her life. The queen awoke and recollected what had befallen her. She wouldn't believe it was true; for finding herself in her palace, amidst her ladies, and her daughter by her side, there was little to show that she had been in the desert, that she had encountered such great dangers, and that the dwarf had saved and preserved her from them on so hard a condition as the gift to him of Toutebelle. Nevertheless, the rare lace of the cap, and the beauty of the ribbon, astonished her as much as the dream she presumed she had had, and in the excess of her anxiety she fell into a melancholy, so extraordinary, that she could scarcely speak, eat, or sleep. The princess, who loved her mother with all her heart, was very uneasy about her. She implored her frequently to say what was the matter with her: but the queen, seeking for pretexts, answered sometimes that she was out of health, and at others that one of the neighbouring states threatened to go to war with her.

Toutebelle saw plainly enough that these were plausible reasons, but that there was something else at the bottom of the matter which the queen studiously concealed from

[1] "Toute-belle est trop belle."

[2] See note, p. 98.

her. Being unable longer to control her anxiety, she resolved to seek out the famous fairy of the desert, whose science was so much talked of everywhere. She was also desirous of her advice on the question of marrying or remaining single, for everybody pressed her strongly to choose a husband. She took care to knead the cake herself which had the power to appease the fury of the lions, and pretending to go to bed early one evening she went out by a little back staircase, her face covered by a large white veil which came down to her feet: and thus, all alone, took the road to the grotto in which the skilful fairy resided.

But on arriving at the fatal orange-tree, of which I have already spoken, she found it so covered with fruit and blossoms that she was seized with an irresistible desire to gather some. She set her basket upon the ground and plucked some oranges, which she ate. When she looked again for her basket and the cake they had disappeared. She is alarmed, she is distressed, and suddenly she sees beside her the frightful little dwarf I before described. "What ails you, fair maid? What are you weeping for?" said he. "Alas! who would not weep?" replied she. "I have lost my basket and my cake, which were so necessary to insure my safe arrival at the abode of the desert fairy."

"Ah! and what would you with her, fair maid?" said the little monkey; "I am her kinsman, her friend, and at least as clever as she is." "The queen my mother," replied the princess, "has lately fallen into an alarming despondency, which causes me to tremble for her life. I fancy I am, perhaps, the cause of it; for she wishes me to marry; and I confess to you that I have not yet seen any one I think worthy of me. It is for this reason I would consult the fairy." "Don't give yourself that trouble, princess," said the dwarf; "I am better fitted than she to enlighten you on such subjects. The queen, your mother, is sorry that she has promised you in marriage." "The queen promised me!" cried the princess, interrupting him. "Oh, you must be mistaken. She would have told me, and I am too much interested in the matter for her

to engage me without my previous consent." "Beautiful princess," said the dwarf, suddenly flinging himself at her feet, "I flatter myself that her choice will not displease you when I inform you that it is I who am destined to enjoy such happiness." "My mother would have you for her son-in-law!" exclaimed Toutebelle, recoiling some paces; "was there ever any madness like yours?" "I care very little about the honour," said the dwarf angrily. "Here come the lions, in three bites they will avenge me for your unjust disdain."

At the same moment the poor princess heard the prolonged roars of the approaching monsters. "What will become of me!" she cried: "must I end my young days thus!" The wicked dwarf looked at her, and laughing contemptuously said, "You will have at least the glory of dying a maiden, and of having escaped the mésalliance of a person of your dazzling worth with a miserable dwarf like me." "For mercy's sake be not angry," said the princess, clasping her beautiful hands. "I would rather marry all the dwarfs in the universe than perish in so frightful a manner." "Look at me well, princess, before you give me your word," replied he, "for I do not wish to take any advantage of you." "I have looked at you more than enough," said she. "The lions are approaching; my terror increases; save me! save me! or I shall die of fright." In fact, she had scarcely uttered these words before she fainted; and without knowing how she got there, found herself, on recovering from her swoon, in her own bed, in the finest linen in the world, with the most beautiful ribbons on her dress, and a little ring made of a single red hair, which fitted her finger so closely that the skin might have been taken off sooner than the ring.

When the princess saw all these things, and remembered what had taken place that night, she fell into a melancholy which surprised and pained the whole court. Her mother was more alarmed than anybody, and asked her hundreds of times what was the matter; but the princess persisted in concealing from her the adventure. At length the great estates of the kingdom, impatient to see the princess married, assembled in council, and afterwards proceeded to have an audience of the queen, whom they petitioned to choose a husband for her daughter as soon as possible. She answered them, that she desired nothing better; but that her daughter evinced so much repugnance to marriage, that she advised them to go and talk to the princess herself upon the subject. They went immediately.

Toutebelle had lost much of her haughtiness since her adventure with the yellow dwarf. She saw no better way of getting out of the dilemma, than by marrying some great king with whom the little monkey would not dare to dispute so glorious a prize. She, therefore, returned a more favourable answer than was hoped for; saying, that although she should have esteemed herself happy in remaining single all her life, she consented to marry the king of the gold mines, a very powerful and handsome prince, who had loved her passionately for several years, and who up to that moment had never been able to flatter himself that she would make the least return to his affection.

It is easy to imagine the excess of his joy when he received such charming intelligence, and the rage of all his rivals at the utter extinction of the fond hopes they had continued to nourish; but Toutebelle could not marry twenty kings. She had much ado to choose one; for her vanity was as great as ever, and she was still fully persuaded that nobody in the world was a fitting match for her.

Everything was prepared for the celebration of one of the grandest entertainments that had ever been given in the universe. The king of the gold mines sent home for such prodigious sums of money that the sea was entirely covered with the ships which returned with them. Agents were despatched to all the most polished and gallant courts, particularly that of France, to purchase the rarest materials for the wardrobe of the princess; though she had less need than anybody of ornament to set off her beauty, which was so perfect that it was impossible to add to it; and the king of the gold mines, thus upon the eve of happiness, never left the side of his charming princess.

The obvious importance of becoming acquainted with the character of her future husband induced the princess to study it carefully. She discovered in him so much merit, so much sense, such deep and delicate feeling—in short, so fine a mind in so perfect a body, that she began to return in some degree his affection. What happy moments were they for both, when, wandering in the most beautiful gardens in the world, they found themselves at liberty to express their mutual sentiments. This pleasure was often heightened by the charms of music. The king, always gallant and amorous, sang verses and songs of his own composition to the princess. The following is one she was much pleased with:—

"The groves, for thee, a richer green put on;
The flowery meads their brightest colours don;
Where'er thy footsteps fall fresh blossoms spring;
Sweeter within thy bowers, the sweet birds sing.
All nature smiles, around, below, above,
All hail the daughter of the god of love!"

Joy was at its height in the palace. The king's rivals, enraged at his success, had quitted it and returned to their own dominions, overwhelmed with the deepest grief, unable to bear the pain of witnessing Toutebelle's marriage. They had taken their leave of her in so touching a manner that she could not help pitying them. "Ah, madam," said the king of the gold mines to her on that occasion, "what an injustice you have done me to-day; you have blest with your pity, lovers who were more than repaid for their sufferings by one glance from your eyes."

"I should be sorry," said Toutebelle, "if you witnessed with indifference the compassion I have evinced for those princes who have lost me for ever. It is a proof of your sensibility, for which I am indebted to you. But, my lord, their position is so different from yours; you have so much reason to be satisfied with my conduct towards you, and they have so little cause to congratulate themselves, that you ought not to carry your jealousy further." The king of the gold mines, overcome by the kind manner in which the princess had received a reproach which might have annoyed her,

threw himself at her feet, and kissing her hand, asked her pardon a thousand times over. At length, the day so long waited and wished for arrived. Everything being ready for the marriage of Toutebelle, the trumpets and musical instruments announced throughout the city the commencement of this grand fête. The streets were carpeted and strewed with flowers. The people flocked in crowds to the great square in front of the palace, The queen, in a state of rapture, had scarcely gone to bed before she got up again, long before daybreak, to give the requisite orders and to select the jewels which the princess was to wear. She was all diamonds down to her very shoes, which were made of them. Her gown of silver brocade was striped with a dozen rays of the sun, which had been bought at an enormous price; but which also could not be surpassed in brilliancy except by the beauty of the princess. A magnificent crown adorned her head, her hair falling in wavy curls to her feet, and her majestic form distinguished her amongst the crowd of ladies who accompanied her.

The king of the gold mines was not less perfect or less magnificent in his appearance. His happiness was visible in all his looks and actions. No one accosted him who did not return laden with his liberalities; for round his banqueting-hall were arranged by his orders a thousand barrels full of gold, and large sacks of velvet embroidered with pearls, crammed with pistoles. Each held a hundred thousand. They were given indiscriminately to all who held their hands for them; so that this ceremony, which was not one of the most useless or least agreeable on this occasion, drew many persons to the wedding who had little taste for entertainments.

The queen and princess were advancing to meet the king, and proceed with him to the altar, when they saw entering the long gallery through which they were passing, two large turkey-cocks, drawing a very clumsily-made box. Behind them came a tall old woman, whose great age and decrepitude were no less remarkable than her extreme ugliness. She leaned on a crutch. She wore a black taffety ruff, a red velvet hood, and a farthingale all in tatters. She took three turns round the gallery with her turkey-cocks before she spoke a word; then, stopping in the centre of it, and brandishing her crutch in a threatening manner, she cried, "Ho! ho! queen!—Ho! ho! princess! Do you fancy you can break with impunity your promises to my friend the yellow dwarf? I am the fairy of the desert! But for him and his orange-tree know you not that my great lions would have devoured ye? We do not put up with such insults in fairyland. Consider quickly what you are about to do; for I swear by my coif, that you shall marry him, or I will burn my crutch."

"Ah! princess," exclaimed the queen bursting into tears, "what do I hear! What promise have you made?" "Ah! mother," cried Toutebelle sorrowfully, "What promise have you yourself made?" The king of the gold mines, enraged at this interruption, and the attempt of the wicked old woman to oppose his marriage, advanced upon her, sword in hand, and placing the point to her throat, cried, "Quit this palace for ever, or with thy life thou shalt atone for thy malice!"

He had scarcely pronounced these words, when the lid of the box flew up with a terrific noise as high as the ceiling, and out of it was seen to issue the yellow dwarf, mounted on a large Spanish cat, and who placed himself between the fairy of the desert and the king of the gold mines.

"Rash youth!" said he to the latter, "think not of assaulting this illustrious fairy: 'tis with me alone thou hast to do! I am thy rival, thy enemy; the faithless princess who would give thee her hand has plighted her troth to me, and received mine. Look if she have not on her finger a ring of my hair. Try to remove it, and thou wilt learn by that little exertion that thy power is inferior to mine." "Miserable monster," said the king to him, "hast thou really the audacity to declare thyself the lover of this divine princess, and to pretend to the possession of so glorious a treasure? Know that thou art a monkey, whose hideous figure is painful to the sight, and that I had ere this despatched thee, hadst thou been worthy of dying by my hand." The yellow dwarf, stung to the very quick, stuck his spurs into the sides of his cat, who set up a terrific squalling, and flying hither and thither, frightened everybody but the brave king, who pressed the dwarf so closely, that he drew a large cutlass with which he was armed, and defying the king to single combat, descended into the courtyard of the palace amidst an extraordinary uproar. The enraged king followed him with rapid strides. Scarcely had they confronted each other, the whole court being in the balconies to witness the combat, when the sun became suddenly as red as blood, and it grew so dark that they could scarcely see themselves. It thundered and lightened as if there was to be an end of the world, and the two turkey-cocks appeared at the side of the yellow dwarf like two giants, taller than mountains, casting out flames from their mouths and eyes in such abundance, that each looked like a fiery furnace. All these horrors were unable to shake the magnanimous heart of the young king. The intrepidity evinced by his every look and action reassured all who were interested in his preservation, and perhaps somewhat embarrassed the yellow dwarf; but his courage failed when he saw the fairy of the desert, her head covered with

long serpents like Tisiphone, mounted upon a winged griffin, and armed with a lance, rush upon his dear princess, and strike her so fierce a blow, that she fell into the queen's arms bathed in her own blood. That tender mother, more deeply wounded by the blow than was even her daughter, uttered shrieks and lamentations which are indescribable. The king's courage and reason at that sight abandoned him together. He ceased fighting, and ran to rescue the princess, or perish with her, but the yellow dwarf anticipated his movements: he leaped with his Spanish cat into the balcony, snatched the princess from the arms of the queen and of the ladies by whom she was surrounded, and then jumping on to the roof of the palace, disappeared with his prize.

The king, motionless with astonishment, was gazing in utter despair on this extraordinary adventure, which unfortunately he had no power to prevent, when, to complete his misery, he felt his eyesight fail him, and that by some irresistible power he was hurried through the vast expanse of air. What misfortunes! Love! cruel love! Is it thus thou usest those who acknowledge thee their conqueror? The wicked fairy of the desert, who came to assist the yellow dwarf to carry off the princess, no sooner set her eyes upon the king of the gold mines than her barbarous heart was touched by the charms of that young prince. She marked him for her prey, and bore him off to the recesses of a frightful cavern, where she loaded him with chains which she had fastened to a rock. She hoped that the fear of approaching death would make him forget Toutebelle, and induce him to do whatever she desired. As soon as they had arrived there, she restored his sight without setting him at liberty, and, assuming by the power of fairy art the graces and charms which nature had denied her, she appeared before him like a lovely nymph, whom chance had conducted to that spot.

"What do I behold?" she cried. "Can it be you, charming prince? What misfortune has befallen you, and driven you to languish in this miserable abode?" The king, deceived by her appearance, replied, "Alas, fair nymph, I know not the object of the infernal fairy who brought me hither; for, although she deprived me of sight when she bore me off, and has not appeared to me since, I know from the tone of her voice that it was the fairy of the desert." "Ah, my lord," exclaimed the false nymph, "if you are in the power of that woman you will not escape without marrying her. She has served more than one hero this trick, and of all persons in the world, she is the most obstinate when she sets her mind upon anything." Whilst she thus pretended to take great interest in the king's affliction, he caught sight of the nymph's feet, which were like those of a griffin. The fairy of the desert was always recognised by this peculiarity, which in all her metamorphoses remained unchanged.

The king took no notice of it, and continuing to talk to her as in perfect confidence, "I do not," said he, "entertain any dislike to the fairy of the desert, but I cannot endure that she should protect the yellow dwarf and keep me in chains like a criminal. What have I done to offend her? I admired a charming princess; but if the fairy restores me to liberty, I feel that gratitude will induce me to love no one but her." "Do you say

that sincerely?" asked the deceived nymph. "Doubt it not," replied the king. "I am unacquainted with the art of dissimulation; and I confess to you that my vanity would be more flattered by the regard of a fairy than by that of a simple princess; but were I dying of love for her, I would evince nothing but hatred to her, until I had regained my liberty."

The fairy of the desert, deceived by these words, resolved to transport the king to a spot which was as beautiful as the cavern he now inhabited was horrible. So compelling him to enter her chariot, to which she had now harnessed swans instead of the bats which usually drew it, she fled with the king of the gold mines from one pole to the other.

But what was the prince's emotion, whilst thus travelling through the boundless regions of air, at beholding his dear princess in a castle all of steel, the walls of which, reflecting the rays of the sun, became like burning-glasses, and scorched to death all who ventured to approach it. She was reclining in a bower beside a streamlet. One of her hands was beneath her head, and with the other she appeared to be wiping away her tears. As she lifted her eyes to heaven, imploring its aid, she saw the king pass by with the fairy of the desert, who, having taxed the magic power she was so skilled in, to appear beautiful in the eyes of the young monarch, seemed to those of the princess the most admirable creature in the world! "How!" she exclaimed, "am I not sufficiently wretched in this inaccessible castle, to which the frightful yellow dwarf has transported me? Must the demon of jealousy come to torture me, to complete my misery? Must I learn by this extraordinary occurrence the infidelity of the king of the gold mines? He has supposed that once out of sight he was absolved from all the vows that he has made me! But who is this formidable rival, whose fatal beauty surpasses mine?"

Whilst the princess was thus speaking, the enamoured king was in mortal agony at being so rapidly borne away from the dear object of his affections. If he had not been so fully aware of the power of the fairy, he would have attempted, at any hazard, to escape from her, either by killing her, or some other means which his love or his courage might have suggested; but what could be done against so powerful a being? Opportunity and stratagem could alone release him from her clutches.

The fairy had perceived Toutebelle, and sought to discover in the eyes of the king the effect which the sight of his darling had produced in his heart. "No one," said the king, interpreting her glances, "can better than myself furnish you with the information you desire; this unexpected meeting with an unhappy princess, for whom I entertained a previous attachment, has caused me some little emotion; but you possess so great an ascendency over her in my mind, that I would rather die than be faithless to you." "Ah! prince," said the fairy, "may I flatter myself that I have inspired you with sentiments so favourable to me?" "Time will convince you, madam," he replied; "but if you would persuade me that I have some share in your good graces, you will not refuse me when I ask your protection for Toutebelle." "Do you know what you ask me?"

aid the fairy, frowning and looking askance at him. "Would you have me employ my science against the yellow dwarf, who is my best friend, and release from his power a proud princess whom I cannot cease to regard as my rival?" The king sighed without replying. What answer could he make so astute a personage? They reached an extensive meadow, enamelled with a thousand various flowers. A deep river surrounded it, and streams from many fountains flowed gently beneath tufted trees, affording ever a refreshing shade. In the distance arose a superb palace, the walls of which were of transparent emeralds. As soon as the swans that drew the fairy's chariot had descended beneath a portico roofed with rubies, and paved with diamonds, thousands of lovely nymphs appeared on all sides, and advanced to receive them with loud acclamations of joy. They sang the following words:—

"When love o'er the heart would a triumph obtain,
Defiance is idle—we struggle in vain.
Resistance gives force to the weapons he wields;
The greater the hero, the sooner he yields."

The fairy of the desert was delighted at hearing this allusion to her conquest. She led the king into the most superb apartment that had ever existed in the recollection of fairies, and left him there for a few minutes alone, that he might not fancy himself positively a prisoner. He felt assured that she was not far off, and that wherever she might hide herself, she had an eye upon all his actions. He therefore advanced towards a large looking-glass, and, addressing it, he said, "Faithful counsellor, allow me to see what I can do to render myself more agreeable to the charming fairy of the desert, for my anxiety to please her is unceasing." So saying, he combed and powdered his hair, put a patch upon his cheek,[1] and seeing on a table a suit of clothes more magnificent than his own, he dressed himself in them as quickly as possible. The fairy re-entered, so transported with joy, that she could not control it. "I appreciate," said she, "the pains you take to please me. You found the way without intending it. Judge then, sir, if it will be a difficult task when you are anxious to do so."

The king, who had his reasons for saying sweet things to the old fairy, was not sparing of them, and by degrees obtained permission to take a daily walk by the sea-side. She had, by the exercise of her art, rendered that coast so dangerous that no pilots were sufficiently adventurous to approach it, so that she had nothing to fear from the favour she had granted to her captive. It was, however, some comfort to him to indulge in solitary musings, uninterrupted by the presence of his wicked jailor.

After having strolled for some time on the sands, he stooped and wrote the following lines in them with a cane which he carried:—

"At length I am at liberty to weep:
My tears in torrents now unchecked may pour,
And ease my labouring bosom's anguish deep.

[1] Mouches. Patches made of small pieces of court-plaister were at this period indispensable to the appearance of a fine gentleman or lady.

Alas! my love I shall behold no more.
O thou that makest this rock-girted shore
To mortals inaccessible! Dread sea,
Whose mountain billows as the wild winds roar:
Now high as heaven, now low as hell, can flee;
Thy state, compared to mine, is calm tranquillity.

"Toutebelle! O cruel destiny! For ever,
For ever lost! The idol of my heart!
Ye gods, when dooming me from her to sever,
Why bade ye not my life as well depart?
Spirit of Ocean! whatsoe'er thou art—
If it be true that e'en beneath the wave
Love hath the power to reach thee with his dart—
Rise from thy pearly grot, thy coral cave,
And from despair a fond and faithful lover save."

As he finished writing, he heard a voice which irresistibly attracted all his attention, and perceiving the tide rising in an extraordinary manner, he looked rapidly around him and saw a female of extraordinary beauty, whose body to the waist was covered only by her long hair, which, gently agitated by the breeze, floated upon the water. She held a looking-glass in one hand, and a comb in the other. Her form terminated in a long fish's tail, furnished with fins. The king was much surprised at so extraordinary an appearance. As soon as she was near enough to speak to him, she said, "I know the sad state to which you are reduced by the loss of your princess, and by the extravagant passion which the fairy of the desert entertains for you. If you are willing, I will convey you from this fatal spot, where you may otherwise languish for more than thirty years longer." The king knew not how to reply to this proposal; not that he wanted any temptation to escape from captivity, but that he feared the fairy of the desert had taken this form to deceive him. As he hesitated, the siren, who could read his thoughts, said, "Do not imagine I am laying a snare for you; I am of too honest a nature to wish to serve your foes. The conduct of the fairy of the desert and of the yellow dwarf has incensed me against them. I see your unhappy princess daily; her beauty and merit equally excite my compassion, and I repeat to you, if you will have confidence in me, I will save you." "I have such perfect confidence in you," said the king, "that I will do whatever you command; but as you have seen my princess, pray give me some news of her." "We should lose too much time in conversation here," said the siren. "Come with me, I will convey you to the steel castle, and leave on the shore a figure so perfectly resembling you, that it shall deceive the fairy."

She immediately cut some sea-rushes, and making a large bundle of them, blew three times upon them, and said, "Sea-rushes, my friends, I order you to lie stretched on the sand, without motion, until the fairy of the desert comes to take you away." The rushes became covered with skin, and so like the king of the gold mines that he had never seen so astonishing a transformation. They were dressed in clothes exactly resembling his, and the countenance was pale and wasted, as if he had been drowned.

The friendly siren then made the king seat himself upon her great fish's tail, and thus they ploughed the sea together in mutual satisfaction.

"I will now willingly inform you," said the siren, "that when the wicked yellow dwarf carried off Toutebelle, notwithstanding the wound the fairy of the desert had inflicted on her, he placed her behind him on the crupper of his horrible Spanish cat. She lost so much blood, and was so terrified by the whole occurrence, that her strength failed her, and she was in a swoon during the entire journey; but the yellow dwarf would not stop to give her the least assistance until he had safely arrived in his terrible steel palace. He was received on his entrance by the most beautiful nymphs in the world whom he had transported thither. They emulated each other in their eagerness to serve the princess. She was put into a bed, the furniture of which was of cloth of gold, covered with pearls as big as walnuts." "Hah!" exclaimed the king of the gold mines, interrupting the siren, "he has married her then? I faint! I die!" "No," said she, "compose yourself, my lord, the constancy of Toutebelle has preserved her from the violence of that hideous dwarf." "Proceed then," said the king. "What more have I to tell you?" continued the siren. "She was in the grove when you passed over it. She saw you with the fairy of the desert, who was so disguised that she appeared to the princess to possess greater beauty than herself. Her despair is not to be conceived. She believes you love the fairy." "She believes that I love the fairy! Just heavens!" cried the king, "into what a fatal error has she fallen, and what must I do to undeceive her?" "Consult your own heart," replied the siren, with a gracious smile. "When we are deeply in love, we need no advice in such a matter." As she uttered these words, they arrived at the steel castle. The side that faced the sea was the only part of it that the yellow dwarf had not fortified with those formidable walls which burned everybody who approached them.

"I know well enough," said the siren to the king, "that Toutebelle is beside the same fountain that you saw her seated near when you passed over the castle gardens; but as you will have some enemies to contend with before you can approach her, here is a sword, armed with which you may dare any encounter, and brave the greatest

dangers; but beware that you never let it fall. Adieu; I go to repose beneath the rock you see yonder. If you need my assistance to convey you and your dear princess any further, I will not fail you; for the queen, her mother, is my best friend, and it was for her sake that I came to seek you." So saying, she presented the king with a sword, made of a single diamond. The rays of the sun were less brilliant. The king comprehended all its value, and unable to find terms in which to express his gratitude to the siren, he implored her to supply his deficiency by imagining all that an honest heart was capable of feeling under such great obligations.

We must now say a word about the fairy of the desert. When she found her amiable lover did not return, she hastened in search of him. She went down to the seashore with a hundred maidens in her train, all bearing magnificent presents for the king. Some carried large baskets filled with diamonds; others golden vases of marvellous workmanship; many bore ambergris, coral, and pearls; others carried on their heads bales of inconceivably rich stuffs; whilst others again carried fruit, flowers, and even birds. But what were the feelings of the fairy, who followed this fair and numerous troop, when she saw the sea-rushes looking so like the king of the gold mines, that it was impossible to distinguish the least difference between them? At this sight, struck with astonishment and the deepest grief, she uttered so fearful a shriek that it pierced the skies, made the hills tremble, and was echoed even in the infernal regions. The furies, Megara, Alecto, and Tisiphone, could not assume a more terrible appearance than did the fairy of the desert at that moment. She threw herself on the seeming body of the king; she wept, she howled, she tore to pieces fifty of the most beautiful maidens who had accompanied her, immolating them to the manes of the dear departed. After this she invoked the presence of eleven of her sister fairies, and requested them to aid her in the construction of a superb mausoleum, in which she might deposit the remains of the young hero. Every one of the eleven was, like the desert fairy, deceived by the appearance of the sea-rushes. This circumstance is enough to surprise one, for fairies in general know everything, but the clever siren proved in this case that she knew more than they did.

While they were collecting porphyry, jasper, agate, and marble, statues, devices, gold and bronze to immortalise the memory of the king they believed to be dead, he was thanking the amiable siren, and conjuring her to continue to protect him. She pledged herself to do so in the kindest manner possible, and vanished from his sight. There was nothing left for him to do, but to advance towards the steel castle.

So, guided by his love, he strode on rapidly, narrowly examining every part of the castle in hopes of discovering his adorable princess; but he was not long without other occupation. Four terrible sphinxes surrounded him, and flying on him with their sharp talons would quickly have torn him in pieces, if the diamond sword had not proved as useful to him as the siren had predicted. He had scarcely flashed it in the eyes of these monsters before they fell powerless at his feet. He dealt each of them its death-blow,

then advancing again, he encountered six dragons, covered with scales harder to pierce than iron. Alarming as was this adventure, his courage remained unshaken, and making good use of his redoubtable sword, there was not one that he did not cut in half at a blow. He was in hopes he had surmounted the greatest obstacles, when a most embarrassing one presented itself. Twenty-four beautiful and graceful nymphs advanced to meet him with long garlands of flowers, which they stretched across his path to impede his progress. "Whither would you go, sire?" said they; "we are intrusted with the guardianship of these regions. If we permit you to pass, innumerable misfortunes will befall both you and us. For mercy's sake do not persist in this resolution. Would you stain your victorious hand with the blood of twenty-four innocent maidens, who have never done anything to displease you?" The king at this sight stood amazed and irresolute. He did not know what course to take. He who professed such extreme respect for the fair sex, and his eagerness to be their champion to the death on every occasion, was in the present case about to destroy some of the fairest! But whilst he was hesitating, he heard a voice which instantly determined him. "Strike! strike!" said this voice to him, "or thy princess is lost to thee for ever!"

At these words, without uttering a syllable in reply to the nymphs, he rushed upon them, broke through their garlands, attacked them without mercy, and scattered them in a moment. This was the last obstacle he had to encounter. He entered the grove in which he had previously seen Toutebelle. She was seated beside the fountain, pale and suffering. He accosted her tremblingly. He would have thrown himself at her feet, but she fled from him as hastily and indignantly as if he had been the yellow dwarf. "Condemn me not unheard, madam," said he; "I am neither faithless nor guilty of any intentional wrong towards you. I am an unhappy lover, who has been compelled, despite himself, to offend you." "Ah, cruel prince," she exclaimed, "I saw you sail through the air with a lady of extraordinary beauty; was it despite yourself you made that voyage?" "Yes, princess," replied he, "it was despite myself; the wicked fairy of the desert was not satisfied with chaining me to a rock, she wafted me in a car to one of the ends of the world, where I should still have languished in captivity, but for the unhoped-for assistance of a beneficent siren who brought me hither. I come, my princess, to snatch you from the power of him who holds you a prisoner. Do not reject the aid of the most faithful of lovers!" He flung himself at her feet and caught the skirt of her gown to detain her: but in so doing he unfortunately let fall the formidable sword. The yellow dwarf, who had lain hidden beneath the leaves of a lettuce, no sooner saw it out of the king's hands than, being aware of its power, he sprang upon and seized it.

The princess uttered a terrible shriek at the sight of the dwarf; but her anguish only exasperated the little monster: with two cabalistic words he conjured up two giants, who loaded the king with chains and fetters. "Now," said the dwarf, "I am master of my rival's fate; but I will spare his life, and give him liberty to leave this place, provided you consent to marry me immediately." "Oh, let me rather die a thousand deaths!"

exclaimed the amorous king. "You die! Alas, my lord!" said the princess, "what can be more terrible to me than such a calamity?" "Your becoming the victim of this monster," replied the king; "can any horror exceed that?" "Let us die together then," continued she. "Nay, princess," rejoined the king, "grant me the consolation of dying for you." "Sooner than that," said the princess to the dwarf, "I consent to your wishes." "Before my eyes!" exclaimed the king; "before my eyes, will you make him your husband? Cruel princess, life will be hateful to me!" "No," said the yellow dwarf; "you shall not see me become her husband; a beloved rival is too dangerous to be endured!"

With these words, despite the tears and shrieks of Toutebelle, he stabbed the king to the heart, and laid him dead at his feet. The princess, unable to survive her lover, fell upon his body, and her spirit quickly fled to join his. Thus perished this illustrious but unfortunate pair, without the possibility of assistance from the siren; for the power of the spell was centred in the diamond sword.

The wicked dwarf preferred seeing the princess dead to beholding her in the arms of another, and the fairy of the desert becoming informed of this event, destroyed the mausoleum she had erected, conceiving as much hatred of the memory of the king of the gold mines as she had formerly entertained passion for his person.

The friendly siren, overwhelmed with grief at so great a misfortune, could obtain no other favour from fate than the permission to change the two lovers into palm-trees. Their two bodies, so perfect during life, became two beautiful trees; still cherishing a faithful love for each other, they joined their branches in fond embraces, and immortalised their passion by that tender union.

"Those who in danger on the stormy main
Vow hecatombs to all the gods they know,
When safe on shore they find themselves again,
Not even near their altars care to go.
All, when in peril, oaths are prone to take;
But let the tragic tale of poor Toutebelle
Warn ye no promise in your fear to make
You would not gladly keep when all is well"

# GREEN SERPENT

ONCE upon a time there was a great queen, who, on giving birth to [illegible] daughters, invited twelve fairies, residing in her neighbourhood, to come and see them, and endow them, as was the custom in those days, and a very convenient custom too, for the power of the fairies generally made up the deficiencies of nature, though it certainly did sometimes spoil what nature had done her best to make perfect.

When the fairies had all assembled in the banquet chamber, a magnificent collation was served up to them. They were just seating themselves at the table, when Magotine entered the apartment. She was the sister of Carabossa, and no less malicious. The queen shuddered at the sight of her, fearing some disaster, as she had not invited her to the entertainment; but, carefully concealing her uneasiness, she placed, herself, an arm-chair for the fairy, which was covered with green velvet embroidered with sapphires. As Margotine was the eldest of the fairies, all the rest made way for her to pass, and whispered to each other, "Let us hasten, sister, to endow the little princesses, so that we may be beforehand with Magotine."

When the arm-chair was placed for her she rudely said she would not have it, and that she was big enough to eat standing. But she made a mistake, for the table being rather a high one, she was not tall enough even to see over it; and this annoyance increased her ill-humour. "Madam," said the queen, "I beg you will take your seat at the table." "If you had wished me to do so," replied the fairy, "you would have sent an invitation to me, as you did to the others; but you would only have handsome persons at your court, with fine figures and fine dresses, like my sisters here. As for me I am too ugly and too old; but, for all that, I have no less power than they, and, without boasting of it, I may perhaps have more." All the fairies pressed her so much to sit down to table, that at length she consented. A golden basket was placed before them, containing twelve bouquets composed of jewels. The fairies who had arrived first, each took her bouquet; so that there was not one left for Magotine, who began to mutter between her teeth. The queen ran to her cabinet, and brought her a casket of perfumed Spanish morocco, covered with rubies and filled with diamonds, praying her acceptance of it; but Magotine shook her head, and said to her, "Keep your jewels, madam; I have enough and to spare. I only came to see if you had thought of me. You have neglected me shamefully." Thereupon she struck the table with her

wand, and all the dainties with which it was loaded turned into fricasseed serpents; at which the fairies were all so horrified, that they flung down their napkins and left the table.

Whilst they were talking together respecting the sad trick Magotine had played them, that cruel little fairy approached the cradle in which the princesses were lying wrapped in their swaddling clothes of cloth of gold, and looking the loveliest children in the world. "I endow thee," said she rapidly to one of them, "with perfect ugliness." She was about to utter some malediction on the other, when the fairies, in great agitation, ran and stopped her; on which the mischievous Magotine broke one of the window-panes, and, darting through it like a flash of lightning, vanished from their sight.

All the good gifts which the benevolent fairies could bestow on the princess were insufficient to alleviate the wretchedness of the queen, at finding herself the mother of the ugliest being in the universe. She took the infant in her arms, and had the misery to see it grow more hideous every instant. She struggled in vain to suppress her tears in presence of their fairy ladyships; she could not prevent their flowing, and it is impossible to imagine the compassion they felt for her. "What shall we do, sisters?" said they to each other; "what shall we do to console the queen?" They held a grand council on the subject, and, on its conclusion, told the queen not to give way so much to grief, as there was a time coming when her daughter would be very happy. "But," interrupted the queen, "will she become beautiful again?" "We cannot give you any further information," replied the fairies. "Be satisfied, madam, with the assurance that your daughter will be happy." She thanked them very much, and did not neglect loading them with presents; for, although the fairies were very rich, they always liked people to give them something; and the custom has descended from that day to this, through all the nations of the earth, without time having had the least effect upon it.

The queen named her eldest daughter Laidronette, and the youngest Bellotte. These names suited them perfectly; for Laidronette became so frightful that, in spite of all her intelligence, it was not possible to look at her; while her sister's beauty increased hourly, and her appearance was altogether charming. The consequence was, that Laidronette, having arrived at twelve years of age, went and threw herself at the feet of the king and queen, and implored them to permit her to go and shut herself up in the lonely castle that she might afflict them no longer with the contemplation of her ugliness. As, notwithstanding her hideous appearance, they could not help being fond of her, it was not without some pain they consented to let her depart; but Bellotte remained with them, and that was a sufficient consolation.

Laidronette beseeched the queen to send nobody with her, but her nurse and a few officers to wait on her. "You need not be under any apprehension, madam, of my being run away with," said she; "and I can assure you that, being what I am, I would willingly avoid even the light of day." The king and queen acceded to her wishes, and

she was conducted to the castle she had chosen to reside in. It had been built many ages. The sea came in close under its windows, and served it for a canal. There was a large forest in the vicinity, to walk or ride in, and several meadows terminated the prospect. The princess played various instruments, and sang divinely. She passed two years in this agreeable solitude, and even wrote in it some volumes of reflections; but the desire to see the king and queen again induced her to take coach and revisit the court. She arrived just as they were about to celebrate the marriage of Bellotte. The joy was universal; but the moment they beheld Laidronette everybody looked distressed. She was neither embraced nor caressed by any of her relations, and the only thing they had to say to her was, that she had grown very much uglier, and that they advised her not to appear at the ball; but that if she wished to see it, they would manage to find some hole for her to peep through. She replied that she had come there neither to dance nor to hear the music; that she had been so long in the lonely castle, that she could not resist quitting it to pay her respects to the king and the queen; that she was most painfully aware they could not endure the sight of her, and that she would therefore return to her wilderness, where the trees, the flowers, and the fountains did not reproach her with her ugliness when she wandered amongst them. When the king and queen saw she was so much hurt, they told her, with some reluctance, that she might stay two or three days with them; but, as she was a girl of high feeling, she answered that it would give her more pain to leave them if she passed so much time in their good company. They were too anxious for her departure to press her to stay, and therefore coldly observed that she was quite right.

The Princess Bellotte, for a wedding gift, presented her with an old ribbon, which she had worn all the winter in a bow on her muff,[1] and the king Bellotte was going to marry gave her some zinzolin taffety[2] to make a petticoat with. If she is to be believed, she would willingly have thrown the ribbon and the rag of zinzolin in the faces of the generous donors; but she had so much good sense, prudence, and judgment, that she exhibited no ill-temper. So with her faithful nurse, she left the court to return to her castle, her heart so full of grief, that she never spoke a word the whole journey.

One day, as she was walking in one of the most gloomy avenues in the forest, she saw at the foot of a tree a large green serpent,[3] which, rearing its head, said to her: "Laidronette, thou art not the only unhappy creature. Look at my horrible form, and know that I was born handsomer even than thou wert." The princess, greatly terrified, heard not one half of these words. She fled from the spot, and for many days did not

[1] The muffs worn by persons of fashion at that period were ornamented with a bow of ribbon in front.
[2] A mixture of silk and red worsted. Zinzolin by itself was much used in the working of tapestry.
[3] From her description of the monster at page 241, it would appear that Madame D'Aulnoy adopted the word serpent in the sense of the German and old English "wurm," worm, which is used indifferently for a dragon or a serpent, and as the former it has been figured in the print to the Geneva and Paris edition of the "Cabinet des Fées," 1785. I have adhered to the word I found in the text, and leave the inference to the reader.

venture to leave the castle, so much was she afraid of meeting with such another adventure. At last, weary of sitting alone in her chamber, she came down one evening, and walked on the sea-beach. She was pacing it slowly, musing on her sad fate, when she perceived sailing towards her a little barque, gilt and painted all over with a thousand various devices. The sail was of gold brocade, the mast of cedar, the oars of eagle-wood.[1] It appeared to be drifting at random, and, coming close in shore, the princess, curious to inspect all its beautiful decorations, stepped on board of it. She found it fitted up with crimson velvet, on a gold ground, the nails being all diamonds. But suddenly the barque was borne to sea again, and the princess, alarmed at the impending danger, caught up the oars, and endeavoured to row back to the beach; but her efforts were in vain. The wind rose, and the waves ran high: she lost sight of land, and, perceiving nothing round her but sea and sky, she resigned herself to her fate, fully assured that it was little likely to be a happy one, and that this was another malicious trick of the fairy, Magotine. "I must die," she said, "and wherefore this secret dread of death? Alas! have I ever yet enjoyed any of those pleasures of life which might cause me to regret leaving it? My ugliness disgusts even my nearest relatives. My sister is a great queen, and I am consigned to exile in the depths of a wilderness, where the only companion I have found is a serpent who can speak. Is it not better I should perish, than drag on so miserable an existence?" With these reflections, she dried up her tears, and courageously looked out for the quarter from which death would come. She appeared to invite his speedy approach; when over the billows she saw a serpent making towards the vessel, and which, on nearing it, said to her: "If you are willing to receive some assistance from a poor green serpent like me, I am able to save your life." "Death is less frightful to me than thou art," exclaimed the princess; "and if thou seekest to do me some kindness, never let me set eyes on thee again." The green serpent gave a long hiss (the manner in which serpents sigh), and without answering a word, went immediately under water. "What a horrible monster!" said the princess to herself. "He has green wings, a body of a thousand colours, ivory claws,[2] fiery eyes, and on his head is a bristling mane of long hair. Oh, I would much rather die than owe my life to him! But," continued she, "what motive has he in following me? and by what accident has he the power of speaking like a rational being?" She was thus musing, when a voice, in answer to her thoughts, said to her: "Learn, Laidronette, that green-serpent is not to be despised; and, were it not a harsh thing to say to thee, I might assure thee he is less hideous in the sight of his species than thou art in the eyes of thine. But, far from desiring to annoy thee, our wish is to lighten thy sorrows, provided thou dost consent." This voice greatly surprised the princess, and the words it uttered appeared to her so unjustifiable that she could not suppress her tears; but a sudden reflection striking her, she exclaimed: "How is this? Do I grieve to die,

[1] See note to page 142.

[2] See note 3, page 240.

because I am reproached with my ugliness? Alas! should I not perish as certainly, were I the handsomest person in the world? It should rather console me, and prevent my regretting the speedy termination of my existence." Whilst she thus moralised, the vessel, completely at the mercy of the winds, drifted on till it struck upon a rock, and went immediately to pieces. The poor princess felt that all her philosophy could not support her in such an extremity. She caught at some pieces of the wreck, and clung, as she imagined, to them; she felt herself supported in the water, and happily reached the shore at the foot of a great rock. Alas! what was her horror, when she discovered that her arms were tightly locked round the neck of the green serpent! Perceiving her dreadful terror, he retired a short distance from her, and said: "You would fear me less, if you knew me better; but it is my hard fate to terrify all who see me." With that he plunged into the waves, and Laidronette remained alone upon the rock, which soared to a prodigious height above her.

On whichever side she cast her eyes she saw nothing to save her from despair. Night was approaching; she was without food, and knew not where to go. "I thought," said she sadly, "to perish in the ocean, but here, doubtless, is the end reserved for me. Some sea-monster will come and devour me, or I shall die of hunger." She climbed up, and seated herself on the summit of the rock. As long as it was light, she gazed upon the ocean; and when it was quite dark, she took off her taffety petticoat, covered her head with it, and remained in trembling expectation of what might befall her. Sleep at length overpowered her; and presently she thought she heard the music of several instruments. She was perfectly persuaded that she was dreaming; but a moment afterwards she heard some one sing the following verse, which seemed to have been composed expressly for her:—

"Suffer Cupid here to wound thee,
Here his gentle sway we own;
Love with pleasure will surround thee,
In this isle no grief is known."

The attention she paid to these words had the effect of waking her completely. "What good or ill fortune now awaits me?" she exclaimed. "Can there yet be happy days in store for one in my wretched condition?" She opened her eyes timidly, under the apprehension of seeing herself surrounded by monsters; but what was her astonishment when, in place of the rude and terrible rock, she perceived an apartment, the walls and ceiling of which were entirely of gold. She was lying in a bed, which perfectly corresponded in its magnificence with the rest of this most splendid palace in the universe. She asked herself a hundred questions respecting this extraordinary sight, not being able to believe she was wide awake. At length she got up, and ran to open a glass door that gave access to a spacious balcony, from which she beheld all the beauties nature, assisted by art, could create upon earth. Gardens filled with flowers, fountains, statues, and the rarest trees; distant woods; palaces, the walls of which were ornamented with jewels, and the roofs composed of pearls, so wonderfully constructed that each was a master-

piece of architecture. A calm and smiling sea, covered with thousands of vessels, whose sails, pendants, and streamers, fluttering in the breeze, completed the charm of the prospect.

"Ye gods! Ye just gods!" exclaimed the princess, "what do I behold? Where am I? What an astounding transformation! What has become of the terrible rock that seemed to threaten the skies with its lofty pinnacles? Can I be she who was shipwrecked last night, and saved by a serpent?" She continued thus talking to herself, walking about, then stopping, perfectly bewildered. At length she heard a noise in her apartment. She re-entered it, and saw advancing towards her a hundred pagods,[1] formed and dressed in a hundred different fashions. The tallest were about a cubit in height, and the shortest not above four inches—some beautiful, graceful, and agreeable; others hideous, alarmingly ugly. Their bodies were of diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, crystal, amber, coral, porcelain, gold, silver, brass, bronze, iron, wood, and clay; some without arms, others without feet, others had mouths extending to their ears, eyes all askew, broken noses; in a word, there is not more variety amongst all the creatures that inhabit the world than there was amongst these pagods.

Those who presented themselves before the princess were the deputies of the kingdom. After an oration, which contained some very judicious reflections, they entertained her by the information, that for some time past they had travelled about the world; but that, in order to obtain their sovereign's permission to do so, they took an oath not to speak during their absence; that some there were, indeed, so scrupulous, they would not even shake their heads, or move their hands or feet, but that the majority of them could not help it. That in this way they traversed the universe; and when they returned, they amused the king by telling him everything that had occurred, even the most secret transactions and adventures in all the courts they had visited. "A pleasure, madam," added one of the deputies, "which we shall have the honour of occasionally affording you; for we are commanded to neglect nothing which can entertain you. In lieu of bringing you presents, we now come to amuse you with our songs and dances." They began immediately to sing the following words, dancing at the same time a round, to the music of tambourines and castanets:—

"Sweet are pleasures after pains,
Lovers, do not break your chains;
Trials though you may endure,
Happiness they will insure.
Sweet are pleasures after pains,
Joy from sorrow lustre gains."

When they ceased dancing and singing, the deputy who had been spokesman said to the princess, "Here, madam, are a hundred pagodines, who have been selected to have the

[1] Pagodes, the French name not only for Indian or Chinese temples, but for those figures, whether idols or not, which have movable heads. "Il remue la tête comme une pagode," is a popular saying in the language.

honour of waiting on you. Every wish you can have in the world will be gratified, provided you consent to remain amongst us." The pagodines appeared in their turn; they carried baskets, proportioned to their own size, filled with a hundred different articles, so pretty, so useful, so well made, and so costly, that Laidronette was never weary of admiring and praising them, uttering exclamations of wonder and delight at all the marvels they displayed to her. The most prominent pagodine, who was a little figure made of diamonds, recommended her to enter the grotto of the baths, as the heat of the day was increasing. The princess proceeded in the direction indicated, between two ranks of body-guards, whose forms and appearance were enough to make one die with laughter.

She found in the grotto two baths of crystal, ornamented with gold, full of scented water, so delicious and uncommon that she was perfectly astonished at it. The baths were under a pavilion of green and gold brocade. The princess inquired why there were two. They answered, that one was for her, and the other for the king of the pagods. "But where is he then?" exclaimed the princess. "Madam," they replied, "he is at present with the army, making war on his enemies. You will see him as soon as he returns." The princess then inquired if he were married. They answered, no; and that he was so charming no one had ever yet been found worthy of him. She indulged her curiosity no further, but undressed and entered the bath. All the pagods and pagodines began to sing and play on various instruments. Some had theorbos made out of nut-shells; others, bass-viols made out of almond-shells; for it was, of course, necessary that the instruments should be proportioned to the size of the performers. But everything was so perfect, and harmonised so completely, that nothing could surpass the delight experienced at their concerts.

When the princess came out of her bath, they presented her with a magnificent dressing-gown. Several pagods who played the flute and the hautboy marched before her, and a train of pagodines followed her, singing songs in her praise. In this state, she entered an apartment, where her toilet was set out. Immediately the pagodines in waiting, and the pagodines of the bedchamber, bustled about, dressed her hair, put on her robes, praised her, admired her. There was no longer talk of her ugliness, of zinzolin petticoats, or greasy ribbons.

The princess was truly astounded. "To whom can I be indebted for such extraordinary happiness?" said she to herself. "I was on the brink of destruction—I awaited death, and could hope for nothing else; and, notwithstanding, I suddenly find myself in the most beautiful and magnificent place in the world, and where I am received with the greatest joy!" As the princess was endowed with great good sense and good nature, she conducted herself in such a manner that all the little creatures who approached her were enchanted at her behaviour.

Every morning, at her levée, she was presented with new dresses, new lace, new jewels. It was a great pity she was so ugly; but, notwithstanding, she who could not abide her

self, began to fancy she was less disagreeable, in consequence of the great pains they took in attiring her. She scarcely passed an hour without some pagods coming to visit her, and recounting to her all the most curious and private circumstances that occurred in the world. Treaties of peace, leagues offensive and defensive, treasons and quarrels of lovers, infidelities of mistresses, distractions, reconciliations, heirs disappointed, matches broken off, old widows remarrying very foolishly, treasures discovered, bankruptcies declared, fortunes made in a minute, favourites disgraced, place-hunters, jealous husbands, coquettish wives, naughty children, ruined cities; in short, what did they not talk of to amuse or interest the princess? She occasionally saw some pagods, who were so exceedingly corpulent, and had such puffed-out cheeks, that they were wonderful to look at. When she asked them the cause, they answered: "As we are not permitted to laugh or to speak during our travels, and are constantly witnessing all sorts of absurdities and almost intolerable follies, our inclination to laugh is so great, that the suppression of it swells us up, and causes what may properly be called risible dropsy, of which we cure ourselves as soon as we get home." The princess admired the good sense of the pagodine people; for really we might be ready to burst with laughter, if we laughed at all the extravagances we are daily beholding.

There was scarcely an evening without a performance of one of the best plays of Corneille or Molière. There were frequent balls. The most diminutive pagods danced on the tight-rope, in order to be better seen. Finally, the banquets given to the princess might have served for feasts at the greatest solemnities. They brought her books of every description, serious, amusing, historical: in short, the days ran away like minutes; although, to speak the truth, all these ingenious pagods appeared to the princess intolerably little, for it often happened that when she went out walking, she had to put some thirty or so into her pockets, in order to take care of them. It was the most amusing thing in the world to hear the chattering of their little voices, shriller than those of the puppets in a show at the fair.

It happened one night that the princess not being able to sleep, said to herself, "What is to become of me? Shall I always remain here? I pass my days more agreeably than I could have ventured to hope; yet something is wanting to my heart. I know not what it is; but I begin to feel that this round of pleasures, unvaried by a single event, is rather insipid." "Ah, princess," said a voice, as in answer to her thoughts, "is it not your own fault? If you would consent to love, you would soon know that it is possible to remain with a beloved object, not only in a palace, but in a frightful wilderness, for ages without wishing to leave it."

"What pagodine speaks to me?" inquired the princess. "What pernicious advice does she give me—inimical to my future peace?" "It is not a pagodine," replied the voice, "who forewarns you of what will sooner or later occur. It is the unhappy sovereign of this realm, who adores you, madam, and who cannot tell you so without trembling." "A king who adores me!" replied the princess. "Has that king eyes, or

is he blind? Can he know that I am the ugliest person in the world?" "I have seen you, madam," answered the invisible being, "and have not found you what you represent yourself. Be it for your person, your merit, or your misfortunes, I repeat, I adore you; but my respectful and timid affection obliges me to conceal myself." "I am indebted to you for so doing," rejoined the princess; "for, alas, what would be my fate should I love any one?" "You would make the happiness of him who cannot live without you," said the voice, "but he will not venture to appear before you without your permission." "No, no," said the princess; "I would avoid seeing any object that might too powerfully interest me." The voice was silent, and the princess remained all the rest of the night in deep meditation on this adventure.

However she might have resolved not to say the least word to any one respecting it, she could not resist asking the pagods if their king had returned. They answered in the negative. This reply, so ill-agreeing with what she had heard, disturbed her. She continued her inquiries as to whether their king was young and handsome. They told her he was young, handsome, and very amiable. She asked if they frequently received intelligence of him. They replied, "Every day." "But," added she, "does he know that I am in his palace?" "Yes, madam," answered her attendants, "he knows everything that occurs here concerning you: he takes great interest in it, and every hour a courier is sent off to him with an account of you." She was silent, and became much more thoughtful than she had formerly been. Whenever she was alone, the voice spoke to her. Sometimes she was alarmed at it: but at others, she felt pleased; for nothing could be more polite than its language to her. "Although," said the princess, "I have resolved never to love, and have every reason to defend my heart against an attachment which could only be fatal to it, I nevertheless confess to you that I should much like to behold a king who has so strange a taste; for if it be true that you love me, you are perhaps the only being in the world who could be guilty of such a weakness for a person so ugly as I am." "Think of me whatever you please, adorable princess," replied the voice. "I find in your merit a sufficient justification for my passion; nor is it from singularity of taste that I conceal myself. I have motives so melancholy, that if you knew them you could not refrain from pitying me." The princess then pressed the voice to explain itself; but it ceased to speak, she only heard long and heavy sighs. All these circumstances made her very uneasy. Although her lover was unknown and invisible to her, he paid her a thousand delicate attentions. Add to this, the beautiful place she was in induced her to desire society more suitable to it than that of the pagods. She consequently began to feel tired and dull everywhere. The voice of her invisible admirer alone had power to please her. Waking suddenly one exceedingly dark night, she found that somebody was seated beside her bed. She thought it was the pagodine of pearls, who, having more wit than the others, used sometimes to come and keep her company. The princess stretched out her arm to take hold of her; but the person seized her hand, pressed it, kissed it, dropped some tears upon it, and was evidently too

much affected to speak. She was convinced it was the invisible monarch. "What would you of me?" said she to him sighing. "Can I love you without knowing or seeing you?" "Ah, madam," replied he, "by what conditions do you fetter the delight of obeying you? It is impossible for me to appear before you. The same wicked Magotine who has so illtreated you, has condemned me to suffer for seven years. Five have already elapsed: two yet remain, the misery of which you could entirely relieve by accepting me for your husband. You will think me a rash fool, and that I am asking an absolute impossibility; but if you knew, madam, the excess of my passion and the extent of my misfortunes, you would not refuse me the favour I implore of you."

Laidronette, I have already told you, had begun to feel very dull; she found the invisible king everything that could be most charming in conversation, and love took possession of her heart, under the specious disguise of generous commiseration. She replied, that she must be allowed some days to consider of it. It was a great thing to have brought her to require only a few days to decide on a matter which he had not ventured to flatter himself she would ever listen to. The fêtes and the concerts recommenced with increased splendour. Nothing was to be heard but hymeneal strains. Presents were continually brought her, surpassing all that had ever been seen. The enamoured voice assiduously wooed her in the sweetest accents, as soon as it was dark; and the princess retired at an earlier hour, in order to have more time to listen to it.

At length she consented to marry the invisible king, and gave him her promise that she would not attempt to see him till the full term of his penance had expired. "It is of vital importance," said the king to her, "both to you and to me. Any imprudent curiosity you might indulge in, would entail on me a recommencement of my penance, and involve you in a like misfortune: but if you can resist the evil counsels that will be given to you, you will have the satisfaction of finding me all your heart desires, and of regaining, at the same time, the marvellous beauty of which the malicious Magotine deprived you." The princess, enraptured at this new hope, vowed a thousand times to her husband that she would indulge in no curiosity without his permission. So the nuptials took place without any public demonstrations; but the heart and the mind were not less gainers by that arrangement.

As all the pagods were eager to amuse their new queen, one of them brought her the history of Psyche, written in a charming style by one of the most popular authors of the day.[1] She found in it many passages bearing a strong resemblance to her own adventures, and it inspired her with such an anxiety to behold her father, mother, sister, and brother-in-law, that all the king could say to her would not suffice to combat this

[1] La Fontaine. His version of the classical story of Psyche was published in 1669. Its great popularity caused it to be selected as the subject for a tragic ballet in five acts by Molière and Pierre Corneille, first performed at court in 1670, and subsequently in public, July 24, 1671.

fancy. "The book you are reading," said he, "displays to you the misfortunes which befell Psyche. Oh, for mercy's sake, profit by the warning, and avoid them!" She promised more than he even required of her; and finally a vessel, manned by pagods, and laden with presents, was despatched with letters from Queen Laidronette to the queen her mother, conjuring her to come and pay a visit to her daughter in her own dominions; and the pagods who were charged with this mission were permitted, on this occasion only, to speak in a foreign land. The loss of the princess had not been entirely unfelt by her relations: they believed she had perished; consequently her letter gave great delight to the court. The queen, who was dying to see Laidronette again, lost not a moment in setting out, with her other daughter and her son-in-law. The pagods, who alone knew the way to their kingdom, safely conducted thither the whole royal family; and when Laidronette saw her relations, she was ready to expire with joy. She read the story of Psyche over and over again, to be completely on her guard respecting any questions that might be put to her, and to regulate her answers to them; but the pains she took were all in vain—she made a hundred mistakes. Sometimes the king was with the army; sometimes he was ill, and in no mood to see any one; sometimes he was on a pilgrimage; and at others, hunting or fishing. At last, it seemed as if she was pledged to talk nothing but nonsense, and that the barbarous Magotine had unsettled her wits.

Her mother and sister consulted together on the subject, and came to the conclusion that she was deceiving them, and might probably be deceived herself. They, therefore, with ill-directed zeal, resolved to tell her so, and managed very skilfully to infect her mind with a thousand doubts and fears. After having refused for a long time to acknowledge the justice of their suspicions, she at last confessed that up to that period she had never seen her husband; but that his conversation was so charming, that it was sufficient happiness to listen to it: that he had yet two years to pass in this state of penance, but that at the end of that time, not only should she behold him, but become, herself, beautiful as the orb of day. "Oh, unfortunate creature!" exclaimed the queen, "how gross is the snare they have laid for thee! Is it possible that thou couldst have listened with such extreme simplicity to such fables? Thy husband is a monster; and how could it be otherwise, for all the pagods, of whom he is the king, are downright monkeys." "I believe, rather," replied Laidronette, "that he is the God of Love himself." "What a delusion!" cried Queen Bellotte. "They told Psyche that she had married a monster, and she discovered that it was Cupid. You are positive that Cupid is your husband, and to a certainty he is a monster! At least, satisfy your mind on this point; enlighten yourself on the matter, as you may so easily." The queen said as much, and her son-in law still more.

The poor princess was so confused and so agitated that, after having sent all her family home, laden with presents, which sufficiently repaid the zinzolin taffety and the muff-ribbon, she resolved, come what would, to obtain a sight of her husband. Oh,

fatal curiosity, which a thousand fearful examples fail to correct in us, how dearly art thou about to cost this unfortunate princess! She would have thought it a great pity not to imitate her predecessor, Psyche; so she concealed a lamp in the same manner, and by the aid of its light gazed upon the hitherto invisible king, so dear to her heart. But what frightful shrieks did she not utter, when, instead of the tender Cupid, fair, white, young, and every way charming, she beheld the horrible green serpent, with his long bristling mane. He awoke, in a paroxysm of rage and despair. "Cruel woman," cried he, "is this the reward of so much affection?" The princess heard him not—she had fainted with terror; and the serpent in an instant was far away.

At the disturbance caused by this tragical scene, some pagods ran to the spot; they carried the princess to her couch, and gave her every assistance. Imagination cannot paint the distress of Laidronette upon returning to her senses. How did she reproach herself for the affliction she had brought upon her husband! She loved him tenderly, but she was horrified at his form, and would have cheerfully given half the remainder of her days never to have seen him.

But these sad reflections were interrupted by the entrance of some pagods into her chamber, with alarm in their countenances. They came to inform her that several ships full of puppets, with Magotine at their head, had entered the harbour, without meeting any resistance. The puppets and the pagods have been enemies from the earliest periods. They are opposed to each other in a thousand ways; and the puppets enjoy the privilege of talking wherever they go, which is denied the pagods. Magotine was their queen. Her hatred of poor green serpent, and of the unfortunate Laidronette, prompted her to assemble her forces, with the intention to come and harass them at the moment they were in the greatest affliction.

She succeeded easily enough in her object; for the queen was in such despair, that, although they urged her to give the requisite directions, she excused herself on the plea that she knew nothing of the art of war. They called together by her desire such pagods as had been in besieged cities, or in the cabinets of the greatest commanders She ordered them to see to everything, and went and shut herself up in her cabinet, looking with an indifferent eye upon all the events of life.

Magotine had for her general that celebrated puppet Punch, who knew his business well, and who had in reserve a large body of wasps, mayflies, and butterflies, who performed wonders against some light-armed frogs and lizards. The latter had been for many years in the pay of the pagods, and were, in truth, much more terrible in name than in action.

Magotine amused herself for some time in witnessing the combat. The pagods and pagodines surpassed themselves in their exertions; but the fairy, with a stroke of her wand, dissolved all their superb edifices. Those charming gardens, those woods, those meadows, those fountains, were overwhelmed with their own ruins, and Queen

Laidronette could not escape the sad fate of becoming the slave of the most malignant fairy that ever was or will be. Four or five hundred puppets forced her into the presence of Magotine. "Madam," said Punch to the fairy, "behold the queen of the pagods, whom I have taken the liberty to bring before you." "She has been long known to me," said Magotine. "She was the cause of my being insulted on the day she was born, and I will never forget it." "Alas, madam," said the queen to her, "I believed you were sufficiently avenged. The gift of ugliness which you bestowed upon me in so supreme a degree might have satisfied any one less vindictive than you." "How she argues!" said the fairy. "Here is a learned doctor of a new sort! Your first employment shall be teaching philosophy to my ants. Prepare yourself to give them a lesson every day." "How shall I set about it, madam?" replied the afflicted queen. "I am ignorant of philosophy, and were I even well versed in it, are your ants capable of understanding it?" "Hear, hear this logician!" exclaimed Magotine. "Very well, queen. You shall not teach them philosophy; but in spite of yourself you shall set the whole world an example of patience which it will be difficult to imitate."

Thereupon she had brought to her a pair of iron shoes so small that she couldn't get half her foot into either of them; but notwithstanding that, she was compelled to put them on. The poor queen could only weep and suffer. "Here!" said Magotine, "there is a spindle full of spider web. I expect you to spin it as fine as your hair, and I give you but two hours to do it in." "I have never spun, madam," said the queen; "but though what you desire appears to me to be impossible, I will endeavour to obey you." She was led immediately into the depths of a very dark grotto, the entrance to which was closed with a great stone, after they had given her some brown bread and a pitcher of water.

In trying to spin this filthy spider web, she dropped her too heavy spindle a hundred times. She had the patience to pick it up again as many, and to begin her work over again, but always in vain. "Clearly do I now perceive," said she, "the extent of my misery. I am consigned to the power of the implacable Magotine, who is not satisfied with having deprived me of all my beauty—she would find some pretext to kill me." She began to weep, recalling to her memory the happiness she enjoyed in the kingdom of Pagodia, and casting away her spindle, exclaimed, "Let Magotine come when she will! I cannot do impossibilities." A voice answered, "Ah, queen, your too imprudent curiosity has caused you these tears; but one cannot see those suffer whom we love. I have a friend whom I have not mentioned to you before. She is called the fairy, Protectrice. I trust she will be of great service to you." Immediately she heard three taps, and without seeing any one, she found her web spun and wound into a skein.

At the expiration of the two hours, Magotine, who was eager for a fray, had the stone rolled from the mouth of the grotto, and entered it, followed by a numerous train of puppets. "Come, come, let us see," said the fairy, "the work of this idle hussy, who

neither knows how to sew nor to spin." "Madam," said the queen, "it is quite true I did not; but I was obliged to learn." When Magotine saw the extraordinary result, she took the skein of spider web, and said: "Verily, you are too skilful, it would be a great pity not to keep you employed. Here, queen, make me some nets with this thread strong enough to catch salmon in." "Nay, for mercy's sake," replied the queen, "remember that it is barely strong enough to hold flies." "You are a great casuist, my pretty friend," said Magotine, "but it will avail you nothing." She quitted the grotto, had the stone replaced at the mouth of it, and assured Laidronette that if the nets were not finished in two hours, she was a lost creature.

"Oh, fairy, Protectrice!" exclaimed the queen, "if it be true that my sorrows can move your pity, do not deny me your assistance." As she spoke, the nets were made. Laidronette was extremely surprised. She thanked, with all her heart, the friendly fairy who had conferred on her such a benefit, and thought with delight that it was undoubtedly her husband who had secured for her such a friend. "Alas, green serpent," said she, "you are very generous, to continue to love me after the injuries I have done you." No reply was made, for Magotine entered, and was much astonished to find the nets so exceedingly well made, that no common hands were capable of executing such a work. "What!" she cried, "will you have the audacity to maintain that you have woven these nets?" "I have no friend in your court, madam," said the queen; "and even if I had, I am so carefully imprisoned that it would be difficult for any one to speak to me without your permission." "As you are so clever and skilful, you will be of great use to me in my kingdom," rejoined the fairy.

She immediately ordered her fleet to be got ready for sea, and all the puppets to be prepared to go on board. She had the queen heavily chained down, fearing that in some fit of despair she might fling herself overboard. One night as the unhappy princess was deploring her sad fate, she perceived, by the light of the stars, the green serpent, who quietly approached the vessel. "I am always afraid of alarming you," said he, "and despite the reasons I have for not sparing you, you are infinitely dear to me." "Can you pardon my imprudent curiosity?" replied she, "and may I say to you without offence:—

"Is it thou? Is it thou, love? Again art thou near?
My own royal serpent, so faithful and dear!
Again dare I hope a fond husband I see?
Oh, what have I suffer'd since parted from thee!"

The serpent replied as follows:—

"To hearts that love truly, to part is a pain,
With hope e'en to whisper of meeting again;
In Pluto's dark regions what torture above
Our absence for ever from those whom we love?"

Magotine was not one of those fairies who occasionally sleep. The desire to do mischief kept her continually awake. She did not fail to overhear the conversation between the serpent king and his wife. She flew to interrupt it like a fury. "Aha!"

said she; "you amuse yourselves with tagging rhymes, do you? and complain in heroics of your destiny? Truly, I am delighted to hear it. Proserpine, who is my best friend, has begged me to send her a poet on hire. Not that there is a dearth of poets below; but because she wants more. Green serpent! I command thee to go finish thy penance in the shades, and to give my compliments to the gentle Proserpine."

The unfortunate serpent departed, uttering prolonged hisses, leaving the queen in the deepest affliction. She felt she had no longer anything to care for. In her passion she exclaimed, "By what crime have we offended thee, Magotine? I was scarcely born when thy fiendish malediction robbed me of my beauty and rendered me horrible. Canst thou accuse me of any crime, when I had not at that time attained the use of reason? when I did not know myself? I am convinced that the unhappy king, whom thou hast just consigned to the infernal regions, is as innocent as I was. But finish thy work. Give me instant death. It is the only favour I ask of thee." "Thou wouldst be too happy if I granted thy prayer," said Magotine. "Thou must first draw water for me from the bottomless spring."

As soon as the ships had reached the kingdom of puppets, the cruel Magotine took a millstone, and tied it round the queen's neck, ordering her to ascend with it to the summit of a mountain which soared high above the clouds. When there, she was to gather four-leaved trefoils enough to fill a basket, and then she was to descend into the depths of the valley, to draw the water of discretion in a pitcher with a hole in the bottom of it, and to bring her as much as would fill her large glass. The queen told her it was out of her power to obey her: that the millstone was more than ten times her own weight; that the pitcher with a hole in it could never retain the water she wished to drink; and that she could not resolve to attempt anything so impossible. "If thou dost not," said Magotine, "rest assured thy green serpent shall suffer for it." This threat so frightened the queen, that without considering her weakness, she endeavoured to walk; but, alas! the effort would have been idle, if the fairy, Protectrice, whom she invoked, had not come to her assistance. "Behold," said the fairy to her, "the just punishment of your fatal curiosity. Blame no one but yourself for the state to which Magotine has reduced you." So saying, she transported her to the top of the mountain, and filled her basket for her with four-leaved trefoils, despite the terrible monsters that guarded the spot, and made supernatural efforts to defend it; but were rendered more gentle than lambs by one tap of the wand of the fairy, Protectrice.

She waited not for the grateful queen to thank her, before she completed her good offices as far as it lay in her power. She gave her a little car drawn by two white canary-birds, who spoke and whistled to admiration. She told her to descend the mountain, and to fling her iron shoes at two giants armed with clubs who guarded the fountain, who would thereupon fall senseless; that she must then give her pitcher to the little canaries, who would easily find means to fill it with the water of discretion; that as soon as she was in possession of it, she should wash her face with it, and she would become the most

beautiful person in the world. She also advised her not to remain at the fountain, nor to reascend the hill, but to stop in a very pleasant little grove she would find on her road; that she might remain there for three years, as Magotine would only imagine that she was endeavouring to fill her pitcher with water, or that she had fallen a victim to some of the other perils of the journey.

The queen embraced the knees of the fairy, Protectrice, and thanked her a hundred times for the special favours she had conferred on her. "But," added the queen, "neither the success I may achieve, nor the beauty, madam, which you promise me, can give me the least pleasure, until my serpent is unserpented." "That will not be till after you have passed three years in the mountain grove," said the fairy, "and have returned to Magotine with the trefoils and the water in the leaky pitcher."

The queen promised the fairy, Protectrice, she would scrupulously follow her directions. "But, madam," she added, "shall I be three years without hearing tidings of king serpent?" You deserve never to hear of him again as long as you live; for can anything be more shocking than to have caused him to recommence his penance?" The queen made no reply, the tears that flowed down her cheeks, and her silence, sufficiently proved the pain she suffered. She got into her little car; the canary-birds did their duty, and conducted her to the bottom of the valley, where the giants guarded the fountain of discretion. She quickly took off her iron shoes, and threw them at their heads. The moment the shoes touched them, they fell lifeless as colossal statues. The canaries took the leaky pitcher, and mended it with such wonderful skill, that there was no appearance of its having ever been broken. The name given to this water made her anxious to drink some of it. "It will make me," said she, "more prudent and more discreet than I have been. Alas, if I had possessed those qualities I should still be in the kingdom of Pagodia." After she had drunk a long draught of the water, she washed her face with some of it, and became so beautiful, so beautiful, you would have taken her rather for a goddess than a mortal.

The fairy, Protectrice, immediately appeared, and said to her, "You have just done that which has pleased me exceedingly. You knew that this water could embellish your mind as well as your person. I wished to see to which of the two you would give the preference, and it has been to your mind. I laud you for it, and this act will shorten the term of your punishment by four years." "Diminish none of my sufferings," replied the queen; "I deserve them all; but comfort green serpent, who deserves none of his." "I will do all in my power," said the fairy, embracing her; "but since you are now so beautiful, I desire you will drop the name of Laidronette, which no longer suits you; you must be called Queen Discrète." So saying she vanished, leaving the queen a pair of little shoes, so pretty and so nicely embroidered, that she thought it almost a pity to wear them.

When she had re-entered her car, with her pitcher full of water, the canaries flew with her straight to the grove of the mountain. There never was a more agreeable

spot. The myrtle and orange-trees interlaced their branches to form long covered walks and bowers, into which the sun could not penetrate. A thousand rills, from gently-flowing fountains, shed a refreshing coolness through this beautiful abode; but what was most curious, all the animals in it spoke, and gave the warmest welcome in the world to the little canaries. "We thought you had deserted us," said they. "The term of our penance is not yet completed," replied the canaries; "but here is a queen whom the fairy, Protectrice, has ordered us to bring to you. Take all the pains you can to amuse her." She was immediately surrounded by all sorts of animals, who paid her their best compliments. "You shall be our queen," said they to her; "you shall find no attention or respect wanting on our parts." "Where am I?" she exclaimed. "By what supernatural power are you enabled to speak to me?" One of the little canary birds, who had remained beside her, whispered in her ear, "You must know, madam, that several fairies being on their travels, were distressed to see persons fall into bad habits. They at first imagined it would be sufficient to advise them to correct themselves, but their warnings were in vain, and, becoming at length quite vexed with them, they imposed penances upon them. Some who talked too much they changed into parrots, magpies, and hens; lovers and their mistresses they transformed into pigeons, canary birds, and lap dogs; those who ridiculed their friends, into monkeys; gormandisers, into pigs; and passionate people into lions. In short, the number of persons they made to do penance was so great that this grove is full of them, and you will therefore find in it folk of all qualities and humours." "From what you have just told me, my dear little canary," said the queen, "I have reason to believe that you are here only because you were too loving." "It is quite true, madam," replied the canary. "I am the son of a Spanish grandee. Love in our country has such absolute power over all hearts, that one cannot resist it without incurring the charge of rebellion. An English ambassador arrived at the court. He had a daughter who was extremely beautiful, but insupportably haughty and satirical. Notwithstanding this, I was caught by her; I loved her to idolatry. Sometimes she seemed touched by my attentions, and at others repulsed me with such disdain that I lost all patience with her. One day that she had exasperated me, a venerable old woman accosted me, and reproached me for my weakness; but all she could say to me only made me more obstinate; she perceived it, and became angry. 'I condemn thee,' said she, 'to be a canary bird for three years, and thy mistress to be a wasp.' Instantly I felt a change take place in me of the most extraordinary description. Despite my affliction, I could not forbear flying into the ambassador's garden, to ascertain what was the fate of his daughter. But I had hardly arrived there when I saw her approach in the form of a large wasp, buzzing four times louder than any other. I hovered round her with the devotion of a lover, that nothing can destroy. She tried several times to sting me.

"'Would you kill me, beautiful wasp?' said I. 'It is unnecessary you should use your sting. You have but to command me to die, and I will obey you.' The

wasp made no answer. She alighted on some flowers, that had to endure her ill-temper.

"Overwhelmed by her contempt, and the situation to which I was reduced, I flew away without caring whither my wings would take me. I arrived at length at one of the most beautiful cities in the universe, and which they call Paris. I was weary; I flung myself on a tuft of large trees, inclosed within some walls, and before I knew who had caught me, I found myself behind the door of a cage, painted green, and ornamented with gold. The apartment and its furniture were of a magnificence that surprised me. A young lady came immediately and caressed me, and spoke to me so sweetly that I was charmed with her. I was not long a resident in her chamber without learning the secret of her heart. I saw a sort of Matamore[1] visit her, who was always in a rage that nothing could appease, and who, not contented with unjustly accusing her, beat her till he left her for dead in the arms of her women. I was not a little afflicted to see her suffer this unworthy treatment, and what distressed me still more was, that the blows he dealt her seemed to have the power of increasing the affection of that lovely lady.

"Night and day I wished that the fairies who had changed me into a canary bird would come and set to rights such ill-assorted lovers. My desires were at length fulfilled. The fairies suddenly appeared in the apartment just as the furious gallant began his usual uproar. They loaded him with reproaches, and condemned him to become a wolf. As to the patient person who had allowed him to beat her, they turned her into a ewe, and sent her into the grove of the mountain. With respect to myself, I easily found means of escape. I wished to see the various courts of Europe. I flew into Italy, and fell into the hands of a man who, having frequent business in the city, and not choosing that his wife, of whom he was very jealous, should see any one in his absence, took care to lock her up from morning till night, so that to me was accorded the honour of amusing this lovely captive; but she had other occupation than attending to me. A certain neighbour, who had long loved her, came in the evening to the top of the chimney, and slid down it into the room, looking blacker than a devil. The keys which the jealous husband had charge of, served only to keep his mind at ease. I was constantly fearing some fatal catastrophe, when one day the fairies entered by the keyhole, and not a little surprised the two lovers. 'Go and do penance!' said the fairies, touching them with their wands. 'Let the chimney sweeper become a squirrel, and the lady an ape, for she is a cunning one; and the husband, who is so fond of keeping the keys of his house, become a mastiff for ten years.'

"It would be too much to tell you," added the canary, "all the various adventures I met with. I was obliged occasionally to visit the grove of the mountain, and I rarely returned to it without finding fresh animals, as the fairies continued to travel, and were incessantly irritated by the numberless faults of mankind; but during your residence here, you will

[1] An epithet of Spanish origin, signifying literally, "a Moorkiller," but applied to a ruffianly bully or professed duellist—the old English "swash-buckler" and the modern "fire-eater."

have time enough to divert yourself by listening to the recital of all the adventures of the inhabitants." Several of them immediately offered to relate theirs whenever she pleased. She thanked them very politely, but as she felt more inclined to muse than to talk, she sought a retired spot, where she could remain alone. As soon as she had fixed on one, a little palace arose in it, and the most sumptuous banquet in the world was served up to her. It consisted only of fruits, but they were of the rarest description; they were brought to her by birds, and during her stay in the grove she wanted for nothing.

There were entertainments occasionally, which pleased her more from their singularity than anything else. Lions were seen to dance in them with lambs; bears whispered tender things to doves, and serpents softened for linnets. A butterfly might be seen courting a panther; in short, there was no classification of species, for it was not that one was a tiger and another a sheep, but simply that they were persons whom the fairies had chosen to punish for their faults.

They all loved Queen Discrète to adoration. Every one made her their umpire in any difference. Her power was absolute in this little republic, and if she had not continually reproached herself as the cause of green serpent's misfortunes, she might have borne her own with some degree of patience; but when she thought of the state to which he was reduced, she could not forgive herself for her imprudent curiosity. The time having arrived for her to leave the grove of the mountain, she gave notice of it to her little conductors, the faithful canaries, who promised her a happy return. She left secretly in the night time, to avoid the leave-takings and lamentations which would have cost her some tears, for she was affected by the friendship and respect which all these rational animals had testified for her.

She forgot neither the pitcher full of the water of discretion, nor the basket of trefoil, nor the iron shoes; and at the moment when Magotine believed her to be dead, she presented herself suddenly before her, the millstone round her neck, the iron shoes on her feet, and the pitcher in her hand. The fairy, at sight of her, uttered a loud cry, and then inquired whence she came. "Madam," said the queen, "I have passed three years drawing water in the broken pitcher, at the end of which time I found the way to make it hold water." Magotine burst into a fit of laughter, thinking on the fatigue the poor queen must have undergone; but, looking at her more attentively, "What's this I see!" she exclaimed. "Laidronette has become quite lovely! How came you by this beauty?" The queen informed her that she had washed herself with the water of discretion, and that this miracle had been the consequence. At these tidings Magotine dashed the pitcher on the ground. "Oh, thou power that defiest me!" she exclaimed, "I will be revenged. Get your iron shoes ready," said she to the queen. "You must go for me to the infernal regions, and demand of Proserpine the essence of long life; I am always afraid of falling sick, and perhaps dying; when I am possessed of that antidote I shall have no more cause for alarm. Take care, therefore, you do not uncork the bottle, nor taste the liquor she gives you, or you will diminish my portion."

The poor queen had never been so astonished as she was by this order. "Which is the way to the infernal regions?" said she. "Can those who go to them return? Alas, madam, will you never weary of persecuting me? Under what luckless star was I born? My sister is much happier than I. It must no longer be thought that the constellations are equally favourable to everybody." She began to weep, and Magotine exulting at the sight of her tears, laughed loudly, and cried, "Go! go! Do not delay a moment your departure on a voyage from which I shall reap so much gratification." She filled for her a wallet with old nuts and black bread, and with this handsome provision the poor queen started, determined to dash her brains out against the first rock she came to, and terminate her sorrows.

She walked for some time at random, now turning one way and now another, and thinking it was a most extraordinary affair to be thus sent to the infernal regions. When she was tired, she lay down at the foot of a tree, and began to think of the poor serpent, forgetting all about her own journey, when suddenly she beheld the fairy, Protectrice, who said to her, "Know you not, beautiful queen, that to release your husband from the shades in which the commands of Magotine detain him, it is necessary you should seek the home of Proserpine?" "I would go much further, if it were possible, madam," replied she; "but I do not know the way by which I can descend into that dark abode." "Hold," said the fairy, Protectrice. "Here is a green branch; strike the earth with it, and repeat these lines distinctly." The queen embraced the knees of this generous friend, and then said after her:—

"Thou who canst wrest from mighty Jove the thunder!
Love, listen to my prayer!
Come, save me from despair,
And calm the pangs that rend my heart asunder!
Be to the realms of Tartarus my guide.
E'en in those drear abodes they own thy sway.
Pluto for Proserpine, thy subject, sighed;
Open for me then to their throne the way;
A faithful husband from my arms they tear!
My fate is harder than my heart can bear;
More than mortal is its pain;
Yet for death it sighs in vain!"

She had scarcely finished this prayer, when a young child, more beautiful than anything we can behold, appeared in the midst of a gold and azure cloud. He flew down at her feet; a crown of flowers encircled his brow. The queen knew by his bow and his arrows, that it was Love. He addressed her thus:—

"I have heard thy tender sighs,
And for thee have left the skies;
Love will chase thy tears away,
All for thee will Love essay.
Shortly shall thine eyes be blest
With his sight thou lovest best;
And the penance that shall be
Of thy cruel enemy."

The queen, dazzled by the splendour that surrounded Love, and delighted at his promises, exclaimed :—

"Down to the realms of woe
I'll fearless follow thee ;
Bliss even there to know,
If there my love I see."

Love, who rarely speaks in prose, struck the earth three times, whilst he sang, in the most enchanting manner, these words :—

"Earth ! my voice obey !
The power of Cupid own !
Ope for Love the way
To Pluto's gloomy throne !"

The earth obeyed. She opened her bosom ; and by a dark passage, in which the queen needed a guide as brilliant as he who had taken her under his protection, she reached the infernal regions. She dreaded meeting her husband in them under the form of a serpent ; but Love, who sometimes employs himself in rendering good offices to the unfortunate, having foreseen all that was to be foreseen in the matter, had already ordered that green serpent should become what he was previous to his penance. Powerful as Magotine was, alas, what could she do against Love? The consequence was, that the first sight that met the queen's eyes was that of her amiable husband. She had never beheld him in such a charming form, and he had never seen her as beautiful as she had become ; but notwithstanding this, a presentiment, and perhaps Love, who made a third in the party, caused each of them to guess who the other was. The queen said to him, with extreme tenderness :—

"I come to share thy prison and thy pain ;
Though doomed no more the light of heaven to see,
Here let but love unite our hearts again,
No terrors these sad shades will have for me !"

The king, transported by the violence of his passion, said, in reply to his wife, everything that could prove his ardour and delight ; but Love, who is not fond of losing time, pressed them to approach Proserpine. The queen gave Magotine's compliments to her, and requested she would intrust her with the essence of long life. It was the watchword between these good people. Proserpine immediately gave the queen a phial very badly corked, in order to induce her to open it. Love, who is no novice, warned the queen against the indulgence of a curiosity which would again be fatal to her ; and quickly leaving those dreary regions, the king and queen returned to the light of day. Love would not abandon them. He led them back to Magotine, and that she might not see him, he hid himself in their hearts. His presence nevertheless inspired the fairy with such humane sentiments, that although she knew not the reason, she received these

illustrious unfortunates very graciously. With a supernatural effort of generosity she restored to them the kingdom of Pagodia. They returned to it immediately, and passed the rest of their days in as much happiness as they had previously endured afflictions and anxieties.

"Too oft is curiosity
The cause of fatal woe;
A secret which may hurtful be,
Why should we seek to know?

"The weakness 'tis of womankind,
Witness the first created;
From whom Pandora was design'd,
And Psyche imitated.

"Each, spite of warning, on the same
Forbidden quest intent,
Of her own misery became
The fatal instrument.

"Psyche's example failed to save
Poor Laidronette from erring;
Like warning she was led to brave,
Like punishment incurring.

"Alas! for human common sense,
No tale, no caution, schools!
The proverb says, Experience
Can render wise e'en fools:—

"But when of our own errors past
The lessons we despise,
Despite the shadows forward cast,
I fear the proverb lies."

# THE PRINCESS CARPILLON

THERE was an old king, who, to console himself for a long widowhood, married a beautiful princess, with whom he was very much in love. By his first wife he had a son, who was crooked and who squinted, and was very much vexed at his father's marrying a second time. "Being an only son," said he, "makes me both loved and feared; but if the young queen should have children, my father, who can dispose of his kingdom, will not consider that I am the eldest: he will disinherit me in their favour." He was ambitious, full of malice and dissimulation; so much so, that without showing his uneasiness, he went secretly to consult a fairy, who was considered the cleverest in the world. The moment he appeared she guessed his name, his rank, and what he wanted. "Prince Bossu," said she—thus he was named—"you have come too late: the queen will have a son. I will not harm it; but should it die, or any accident happen to it, I promise you that I will prevent there being any other." This promise slightly consoled the humpback. He intreated the fairy to remember him; and resolved within himself to do some mischief to his little brother as soon as he was born. At the end of nine months the queen had a son, the handsomest in the world; and they remarked, as an extraordinary thing, that he had the figure of an arrow imprinted upon his arm. The queen loved her child so much, that she would nurse it herself; which annoyed Prince Bossu exceedingly, for the care of a mother is greater than that of a nurse, and it is much more easy to deceive the one than the other. However, the humpback, who was solely bent on gaining his end, evinced so much affection for the queen, and love for the little prince, that the king was delighted. "I should never have thought," said he, "my son was so good-natured; and if he continues so, I shall leave him a portion of my kingdom."

These promises were not sufficient for the humpback—he would have all or none; so one night he presented the queen with some sweetmeats that had opium in them. She went to sleep; immediately the prince, who had hidden himself behind the tapestry, softly took the little prince, and put in his place a large cat, enveloped in swaddling clothes, that the rockers might not perceive the theft. The cat squalled, the rockers rocked: at last it made such a racket, that they thought it was hungry. They awoke the queen, who, still overpowered with sleep, and thinking she had hold of her dear baby, began to suckle it; but the savage cat bit her: she screamed out, and looking at it, what was her horror when she saw a cat's head instead of her son's! Her grief was

so intense, that she thought she should die upon the spot. The queen's ladies disturbed the whole palace by their screams. The king put on his dressing-gown, and ran to the queen's apartments. The first thing he saw was the cat, in the swaddling clothes of cloth-of-gold, worn usually by his infant son. They had thrown it on the ground, where it was squalling wonderfully. The king was much alarmed, and inquired what it meant. They told him that they knew nothing at all about it, but that the little prince was not to be seen, that they had sought for him in vain, and that the queen was much hurt. The king entered the queen's bedroom: he found her in sad affliction, and not wishing to increase it by his own, he did violence to his feelings to console this poor princess.

In the meanwhile the humpback had given his little brother to one of his own people. "Carry him to a distant forest," said he to him, "and leave him quite naked in the most exposed situation, that the wild beasts may devour him, and we may never hear any more of him. I would carry him there myself, so much do I fear you will not strictly execute my orders; but I must appear before the king: go, then, and be sure that if I should reign, I shall not be ungrateful." He put the poor child himself into the covered basket; and as he was accustomed to fondle him, the infant already knew him, and smiled at him; but the merciless humpback was less moved by it than a rock. He went instantly into the queen's chamber half-dressed, from being in so much haste he said. He rubbed his eyes, as if scarcely awake, and when he learned the sad news of his stepmother's injury, of the loss of the prince, and saw the cat in the swaddling clothes, he uttered such sad cries, that they were as much occupied in consoling him as if he really had been greatly afflicted. He took the cat and wrung its neck with a ferocity that was quite natural to him, but which he made them believe was excited by the mischief the animal had done to the queen. Although he was notoriously wicked enough to perpetrate such a deed, no one suspected him of being the culprit—his guilt was so artfully concealed by his feigned affliction. The king and queen felt quite grateful to this wretch, and commissioned him to send to all the fairies, and find out what had become of their child.

Impatient to put an end to their researches, he brought them several different and very enigmatical answers, that all tended to the same point:—that the prince was not dead—that he had been taken away for a time for some inscrutable reason; that he would be restored to them, perfect in every respect; and that they should seek him no longer, as it would be only labour in vain. He imagined that by such answers he should keep them quiet; and he was right in his conjecture.

The king and queen flattered themselves they would one day see their son again; in the meanwhile the bite that the cat had given the queen proved so venomous, that she died of it, and the king, overwhelmed with grief, shut himself up for a whole year in his palace. He expected still to have news of his son, and expected in vain.

The man who took the child away walked all night without stopping; when morning began to dawn he opened the basket, and the sweet infant smiled at him, as he used to

do at the queen when she took him in her arms. "Oh, poor little prince," said he; "how unfortunate is thy destiny! Alas, thou art to be food, like some gentle lamb, to a famishing lion! Why did the humpback choose me to help him to destroy thee?" He shut the basket, that he might no longer behold so pitiable an object; but the child, who had passed the night without nourishment, began to cry lustily. The man who carried him gathered some figs, and put them in his mouth; the sweetness of the fruit quieted him a little, and thus the man continued to carry him till the following night, when he came to a large and dark forest. He would not enter it at that hour, for fear of being devoured himself, but the next morning he resumed his journey, still carrying the basket. The forest was so large that whichever way he looked he could see no end to it, but in a spot thickly surrounded with trees he perceived a rock, terminating in several rugged peaks. "Here, no doubt," said he, "is the retreat of the most savage beasts. I must leave the infant here, since I am not in a situation to save it." He approached the rock. Immediately an eagle, of a prodigious size, rushed out, flying round and round, as though she had left something in her nest; in fact it was her young ones, whom she was feeding, at the bottom of a sort of grotto. "Thou wilt be the prey of these birds, who are the kings of others, poor child," said the man. With that he unswathed it, and laid it down beside the three eaglets. Their nest was large, and sheltered from the inclemency of the weather. He had much trouble in putting the prince there, because the side of the rock by which it could be approached was very rugged and overhung a frightful precipice. He withdrew sighing, and saw the eagle returning swiftly to its nest. "Ah," said he, "there is an end of it! the child will soon be no more." He hurried away, that he might not hear its last cries. He returned to the humpback, and assured him that he no longer had a brother. At this news the barbarous prince embraced his faithful minister, and gave him a diamond ring, assuring him that when he became king he would make him captain of his army. The eagle, on returning to her nest, was perhaps surprised to find the new guest in it; surprised or not, she exercised the rights of hospitality better than many people would have done. She nestled close to her nursling, covered him with her wings, and warmed him. It seemed as if she had no longer any care but for him; a peculiar instinct induced her to seek fruits for him, to peck them, and to pour the juice into the rosy mouth of the little prince; in short, she fed him so well that his royal mother could not have nursed him better. As soon as the eaglets became stronger, the eagle took them out by turns, sometimes on her wings, sometimes in her talons, and thus accustomed them to look at the sun, without shutting their eyelids. The eagles sometimes left their mother, and flew a little around her, but the little prince could do nothing of this sort, and when she carried him in the air, he ran great risks of falling and killing himself. Fortune befriended him. It was she who had provided so extraordinary a nurse for him; it was she who prevented his falling. Four years passed in this manner. The eagle lost all her young ones, they flew away when they were big enough; they never returned to see their mother or their

nest. The prince, who had not strength to go far, remained upon the rock, for the prudent and anxious eagle, apprehensive of his falling down the precipice, carried him to the other side, and lodged him in so narrow a cleft that the wild beasts could not get to him. Love, whom they paint as perfect, was far less so than this young prince. The heat of the sun could not tarnish the lilies and roses of his complexion; there was so much regularity in all his features, that the finest painters could not imagine anything to equal them; his hair was already long enough to fall over his shoulders, and he had so lofty a mien that there had never been seen in a child anything so noble and grand. The eagle loved him with an overwhelming affection; she fed him with nothing but fruit, making this difference between him and her eaglets, to whom she gave only raw flesh. She ruined all the shepherds around in carrying away all their lambs, without mercy; nothing was talked of but the ravages of the eagle. At last, tired of feeding her at the expense of their flocks, they resolved amongst themselves to discover her retreat. They separated in several parties, following her flight; roaming the mountains and the valleys for a long time without success; but one day they saw her alight upon a great rock; the most courageous of the party ventured to ascend it, although surrounded by a thousand dangers. The bird had at that time two little eaglets that she carefully tended, but dear as they were to her, her affection was still stronger for the young prince, with whom she had been longer acquainted. As she was not in her nest when the shepherds discovered it, they had not much difficulty in pulling it to pieces, and carrying off its contents; but what was their surprise at beholding the prince! There was something in the circumstance so wonderful that their limited reason could not at all understand it.

They carried away the child and the eaglets, all three screaming together. The eagle heard them, and came swooping down upon the ravishers of her property. They would have felt the effects of her fury if she had not been shot dead by an arrow which one of the shepherds let fly at her. The young prince, full of natural feeling, seeing her fall, uttered pitiful cries, and wept bitterly. After this adventure the shepherds returned to their villages. A cruel ceremony was to take place the next morning, for the following reason:—This country, for a long time past, had been the resort of ogres. The inhabitants, alarmed at such dangerous neighbours, had tried every means to get rid of them, without success. These terrible ogres, incensed by the hatred that was manifested towards them, redoubled their cruelties, and devoured, without exception, all who fell into their hands.

One day that the shepherds had assembled to deliberate on the steps that should be taken against the ogres, all at once, in the midst of them appeared a man of tremendous size; half of his body was like that of a stag, covered with a blue skin. He had the feet of a goat, a club over his shoulder, and a buckler in his hand. He said to them, "Shepherds, I am the blue centaur; if you give me a child every three years, I promise to bring here a hundred of my brothers, and make such fierce war upon the ogres, that we will drive them out, whatever may be their numbers."

The shepherds hesitated to agree to do anything so cruel, but the most venerable amongst them said, "What, then, my friends, is it more advantageous to us that the ogres should each day eat our fathers, our children, and our wives? By sacrificing one we should save many. Do not let us then refuse the offer the centaur has made us." Upon this they all consented to it. They pledged themselves by sacred oaths to keep their word with the centaur, and that the child should be ready for him.

He departed, and returned, as he promised, with his brothers, who were all as monstrous as himself. The ogres were as brave as they were cruel. They fought several battles, in which, however, the centaurs were always victorious, and at last obliged them to fly. The blue centaur appeared to claim his reward. Every one said nothing could be more just; but when they came to select the promised child, there was not a family who would make up their minds to give one of theirs; the mothers hid their infants almost in the bosom of the earth. The centaur, who would not be trifled with, after having waited twice four-and-twenty hours, told the shepherds that he expected they would give him as many children as he stayed days with them, and the delay cost them six little boys and six little girls. From that time forth they regulated this serious affair, and every third year they made a solemn ceremony on the delivery of the poor child to the centaur.

It was, then, the following morning after the prince had been taken from the eagle's nest that this tribute was due, and although the child had been already chosen, it is easy to believe the shepherds willingly substituted the prince: the uncertainty of his birth—for they were so simple they sometimes believed the eagle was his mother—and his wonderful beauty, decided them absolutely to present him to the centaur, for he was so dainty he would not eat children that were not very pretty. The mother of the infant they had selected, relieved from the horror of contemplating the death of her child, found her despair thus suddenly changed into joy. They desired her to adorn the young prince for the sacrifice, as she had previously her son. She carefully combed his long hair, and made him a crown of little red and white hedge-roses. She dressed him in a long robe of fine white linen, with a girdle of flowers; thus adorned, he marched at the head of several children who were to accompany him; but how can I describe his lofty air, or the nobleness that already sparkled in his eyes. He who had never seen anything but eagles, and who was still of so tender an age, appeared neither frightened nor wild; it seemed to him that all those shepherds had assembled merely to please him. "Ah, what a pity!" said they to each other; "what, is this child going to be devoured? can we not save it?" Many wept, but it was impossible to avoid making the sacrifice.

The centaur was in the habit of appearing upon the top of the rock, his club in one hand, his buckler in the other, and from thence, in a dreadful voice, he cried out to the shepherds, "Leave me my prey, and retire." The moment he saw the child they had brought him, he was greatly delighted, and, shouting so loud that the mountains trembled,

he exclaimed, "This is the best breakfast I ever had in all my life. I shall want neither pepper nor salt to eat this little boy." The shepherds and shepherdesses looked at the poor child, saying to themselves, "The eagle has spared it, but here is the wretch that will end its days." The oldest shepherd took it in his arms, and kissed it often. "Oh, my child, my dear child," said he, "I do not know thee, but yet I feel that I have seen too much of thee! Must I assist at thy funeral? Why did fortune defend thee from the talons of the eaglets and from the hooked-beak of the eagle, since she abandons thee to-day to the voracious appetite of this horrible monster?"

While the shepherd was moistening the rosy cheeks of the prince with tears which flowed from his eyes, the sweet innocent passed his little hands through his grey hairs, smiling at him in a sweet infantile manner, and the more he inspired him with pity, the more he hesitated to advance with him. "Make haste," exclaimed the hungry centaur; "if you make me come down, if I have to come to you, I will eat more than a hundred." His patience, in fact, began to fail him; he rose and flourished his club, when there appeared in the air a large globe of fire, surrounded by an azure cloud. As every one was attentively looking at this extraordinary sight, the cloud and the globe descended by degrees, and then the latter opened, and out of it issued immediately a chariot of diamonds, drawn by swans, in which was seated the most beautiful lady in the world. On her head was a helmet of pure gold, surmounted with white feathers, the vizor was up, and her eyes were as brilliant as the sun. She wore a rich cuirass, and the fiery lance she wielded betokened she was an amazon.

"What! shepherds," cried she, "have you the inhumanity to sacrifice such a child to a cruel centaur? It is time to liberate you from your promise. Justice and reason are opposed to such barbarous custom. No longer fear the return of the ogres: I will guarantee your safety. I am the fairy amazon, and from this moment I take you under my protection." "Ah! madam," said the shepherds and shepherdesses, lifting up their hands to her, "it is the greatest happiness that could happen to us." They could say no more, for the infuriated centaur defied the fairy to the combat. It was fierce and obstinate; the fiery lance burnt the monster wherever it struck him, and he uttered horrible yells, which ceased only with his life. He fell completely roasted, and you would have said it was a mountain that had been overthrown, so tremendous was the shock. The frightened shepherds hid themselves, some in a neighbouring forest, others at the bottom of the rocks, in cavities where they could see all, without being seen.

It was there the wise shepherd, who held the little prince in his arms, took refuge; much more uneasy about what would happen to this amiable child, than what might be the issue to him or to his family, though the latter well deserved consideration. After the death of the centaur, the fairy amazon took a trumpet, which she blew so melodiously, that the sick who heard it arose in perfect health, and others felt a secret joy which they could not tell the meaning of.

The shepherd and shepherdesses, at the sound of the harmonious trumpet, re-

assembled. When the fairy amazon saw them, in order to reassure them entirely she advanced towards them in her chariot of diamonds, descending by degrees, till she came within three feet of the earth. The cloud on which the chariot rolled was so transparent that it appeared like crystal. The old shepherd, whom they called Sublime, advanced, holding the little prince in his arms. "Approach, Sublime," said the fairy, "fear nothing more. I intend peace to reign for the future in these regions, and that you shall enjoy the repose you came to seek in them; but give me this poor child, whose fate is already so extraordinary." The old man, having made a profound reverence, raised his arms, and put the prince in hers. She kissed and embraced him a thousand times, set him on her knees and talked to him. She knew, nevertheless, that he could neither speak nor understand any language; he uttered cries of joy or of grief, heaved sighs, and made inarticulate noises; for he had never heard any one speak.

He was, however, quite dazzled by the brilliant armour of the fairy amazon. He got up on her knee, to reach her helmet, that he might touch it. The fairy laughed at him, and told him, as though he could understand her, "When thou art able to carry arms, my son, thou shalt not be without them." After she had again caressed him very much, she returned him to Sublime. "Good old man," said she to him, "you are not unknown to me; do not disdain to take care of this child; teach him to have a contempt for the pomps of the world, and to be above the frowns of fortune—he is, perhaps, born to a very brilliant one; but, I maintain, that wisdom will make him happier than power. Man's happiness ought not to consist of outward grandeur; to be happy, one must be wise, and to be wise one must know one's self—be able to limit one's desires, be content in poverty as in opulence, seek the esteem of men of merit, despise no one, and be always prepared to quit the riches of this wretched life without sorrow. But what am I thinking about, venerable shepherd? I talk to you of matters you are much better acquainted with than I am; but, it is also true, I am speaking more to the other shepherds, who are listening to me, than to you. Adieu, herdsmen; adieu, shepherds; call me in your need; this same lance and hand, which have just exterminated the blue centaur, will be always ready to protect you." Sublime, and all who were with him, as much astonished as delighted, could make no answer to the obliging words of the fairy amazon; in their excitement and joy they humbly prostrated themselves before her; and while they were in that position, the globe of fire gently rising to the regions above, disappeared with the amazon and the chariot.

The timid shepherds dared not at first approach the centaur, for, dead as he was, they were afraid of him; by degrees they became accustomed to him, and agreed among themselves that they must make a great pile, and burn him to ashes, for fear his brothers, aware of what had happened, should come and avenge his death upon them. This opinion having been adopted, they lost not a moment in setting about it, and ridding themselves of the odious carcase.

Sublime carried the little prince to his hut; his wife was at home ill, and his two

daughters had not been able to leave her to attend the ceremony. "Here, shepherdess," said he, "here is a child, cherished by the gods, and protected by a fairy amazon; we must look on him for the future as our son, and give him an education that may render him happy." The shepherdess was delighted with the present he made her; she took the prince on her bed. "At least," said she, "if I cannot give him such good lessons as you can, I shall bring him up from childhood, and cherish him as my own son." "That is what I ask of you," said the old man; and thereupon he gave him to her. The two daughters ran to look at him; they were charmed with his incomparable beauty, and all the graces of his little person. From that moment they began to teach him their language, and never could there be found a prettier or more intelligent pupil; he learned the most difficult things with a facility which astonished the shepherd; so that he was very soon sufficiently advanced to receive lessons from him only. This wise old man was able to give him the best advice; for he had been a king of a fine and flourishing kingdom, but a usurper, a neighbour and an enemy, successfully conducted his secret intrigues, and gained over certain factious spirits, who rose in rebellion, and enabled him to surprise the king and all his family, whom he immediately ordered to be shut up in a fortress, where he intended them to perish miserably.

So strange an alteration had no effect upon the virtue of the king and queen; they resolutely suffered all the outrages that the tyrant ordered to be executed upon them; and the queen, who was with child when this disgrace occurred, was confined with a girl, whom she nursed herself; she had two other very amiable children, who shared her troubles as much as their age would permit of. At the end of three years the king gained over one of his guards, who agreed to bring a small boat for him to cross the lake, in the middle of which the fortress was built. He provided them with a file to cut the iron bars of their rooms, and with cords to descend by. They fixed upon a very dark night. Everything was favourable; and without any noise, the guard assisted them to slide down the walls, that were frightfully high: the king went down first, then followed the daughters, afterwards the queen, then the little princess in a large basket; but, alas! they had tied her in badly, and suddenly they heard her fall into the lake. If the queen had not fainted from grief, she would have awakened all the garrison by her shrieks and lamentations. The king, distressed at this accident, sought for the child as much as it was possible in so dark a night: he found the basket, and hoped the princess was in it; but she was not there, and he was obliged to row to save himself and the rest of the family. At the border of the lake they found horses ready for them, that the guard had ordered to be there to take the king wherever he would like to go. During his imprisonment he and his queen had had time to moralise, and perceive that the greatest benefits of this world are as nothing when estimated at their true value; this, added to the misfortune that had just occurred to them of losing their little girl, made them resolve not to take refuge among the kings, their neighbours and their allies, where perhaps they would have been considered a burden; so, taking their own course, they established

themselves in a fertile plain, the most agreeable of any spot they could have chosen. In this place, the king, changing his sceptre for a sheephook, bought a large flock and became a shepherd. He built a little country house, sheltered on one side by mountains, and having on the other a stream well filled with fish. Here they enjoyed more peace than they had on their throne; no one envied them their poverty, they feared neither traitors nor flatterers; their days flew by without sorrow, and the king often said, "Ah! if men could cure themselves of ambition, how happy they would be! I have been a king, now I have become a shepherd—I prefer my cottage to the palace in which I reigned."

It was with this great philosopher that the young prince studied; he knew not his master's rank, neither did the master know the parentage of his pupil; but he saw in him such noble feelings, that he could not believe nim to be an ordinary child. He remarked with pleasure that he placed himself nearly always at the head of his companions, with an air of superiority that commanded their respect. He was continually forming little armies; he built forts, and attacked them. He went hunting, also, and braved the greatest perils, notwithstanding all the remonstrances the shepherd could make. All these things convinced him that he was born to command. But, while he is being educated, and till he has attained the age of fifteen, let us return to the king his father's court.

Prince Bossu, finding his father becoming very old, had scarcely any respect for him—he was impatient at waiting so long for the succession. To console himself, he asked the king for an army that he might invade a neighbouring kingdom, the fickle population of which had made overtures to him. The king agreed to it, on condition that, before his departure, he would witness the signing of an act by the lords of his kingdom to this effect—that if ever the prince, his youngest brother, returned, and they were satisfied it was he by finding the mark of the arrow upon his arm, he should be recognised as sole heir to the crown. The humpback not only willingly assisted at this ceremony, but would sign the act himself, though his father thought it too much to expect from him; but as he felt sure of the death of his brother, he hazarded nothing, while he assumed great credit to himself for this proof of his complacency; in consequence of which the king assembled the states, addressed them, shed many tears when speaking of the loss of his son—moving all those to pity who heard him, and after having signed the instrument, and caused the principal nobles to sign it, he commanded them to place it in the royal treasury, and that several authenticated copies should be made for the better recording of it.

Prince Bossu then took leave of him, to head a fine army and attempt the conquest of the kingdom to which he was invited; and after many battles, he killed his opponent with his own hand, took the capital city, placed garrisons and appointed governors in every direction, and returned to his father, to whom he presented a young princess named Carpillon, whom he had taken prisoner

She was so extremely beautiful, that all that nature had ever previously created, and all that the imagination could fancy, could not be compared to her. The king was enchanted at the sight of Carpillon; and the humpback, who had been acquainted with her some time, had fallen so deeply in love with her that he knew not a moment's rest: but as much as he loved her, so much she hated him, as he never spoke to her but as her master, and reminded her always that she was his slave. Her heart so revolted at his coarse manners, that she tried to avoid him as much as possible.

The king had given her an apartment in his palace, and women to wait upon her; he felt for the misfortunes of so young and beautiful a princess. When the humpback told him he intended to marry her, "I consent to it," replied he, "provided she is not averse to it; for it appears to me, that when you are near her, she is always melancholy." "It is because she loves me," said the humpback, "and dares not acknowledge it. The constraint causes her to feel embarrassed; as soon as she is my wife, you will see her happy." "I should like to believe it," said the king; "but do you not flatter yourself a little too much?" The humpback was much annoyed by his father's doubts. "You are the cause, madam," said he to the princess, "of the king's treating me with a severity which is not usual with him. Perhaps he loves you: tell me so candidly, and choose between us—provided I see you reign, I shall be satisfied." He spoke thus to ascertain her sentiments; for he had no idea of altering his own intentions. The young Carpillon, who knew not yet that the greater number of lovers are artful and deceitful creatures, fell into the trap. "I own, my lord," said she to him, "that if I were my own mistress, I should neither choose the king nor you; but if my ill fortune compels me to this sad necessity, I prefer the king." "And why?" replied the humpback, endeavouring to constrain himself. "Because," added she, "he is milder than you are, that he reigns at present, and that perhaps he may not live so long." "Ah! little wretch," replied the humpback, "you would marry my father in order to be queen-dowager after a little while. Most assuredly you shall not—he does not think of you; it is I who am good enough to do so—goodness, to speak the truth, ill-bestowed, for you are insupportably ungrateful; but, were you a hundred times more so, you should be my wife."

The Princess Carpillon learned, but a little too late, that it is sometimes dangerous to say all one thinks; and, to make amends for what she had just said, "I wished to ascertain your sentiments," replied she to him; "I am very glad that you love me sufficiently to resent the harshness that I have affected. I esteem you already, my lord; endeavour to make me love you." The prince, in his turn, fell headlong into the trap, obvious as it was; but people are generally very foolish when they are much in love, and have an inclination to flatter themselves which it is difficult to correct. Carpillon's words made him milder than a lamb, he smiled, and pressed her hands till he hurt them.

As soon as he had left her she ran to the king's apartment, and throwing herself at his feet, "Protect me, sire," said she, "from the greatest of misery: Prince Bossu insists

upon marrying me. I confess that he is odious to me: do not be so unjust as he is? my rank, my youth, and the misfortunes of my family merit the compassion of so great a king as you are." "Beautiful princess," said he "I am not surprised that my son loves you—it must be the case with all who see you; but I will never forgive him for failing in the respect due to you." "Ah! sire," replied she, "he looks upon me as his prisoner, and treats me as his slave." "It is with my army," replied the king, "that he conquered the conqueror of the king your father: if you are a captive, you are my captive, and I restore you to liberty; happily my advanced age and my white hairs preserve me from becoming your slave." The grateful princess thanked the king a thousand times, and retired with her ladies.

The humpback, having learned what had just passed, resented it deeply; and his fury increased when the king desired him not to think of the princess, until by great and constant kindness he should overcome her dislike. "I shall have to labour then all my life, and perhaps uselessly," said he; "I do not like losing my time." "I am sorry on your account," replied the king, "but it can be upon no other terms." "We shall see," insolently answered the humpback, as he quitted the room. "You presume to take away my prisoner from me—I will lose my life sooner." "She whom you call your prisoner, was mine," added the irritated king. "She is now at liberty; she shall be her own mistress, and not dependent upon your caprice."

So sharp a conversation might have led to higher words still, had not the humpback thought proper to retire. He forthwith resolved to make himself master of the kingdom and of the princess. He had ingratiated himself with the troops while he commanded them, and there were seditious men who willingly seconded his bad designs. The king was warned that his son was endeavouring to dethrone him; and, as the prince was the strongest, the king could take no other course than that of mildness. He sent for him and said to him, "Is it possible that you are so ungrateful that you wish to dethrone me, and seat yourself in my place? You see I am at the brink of the grave; do not hasten the end of my life. Have I not been sufficiently afflicted, by the death of my wife and the loss of my son? It is true I am opposed to your designs on the Princess Carpillon; but it's out of consideration for you, as much as for her; for, can one be happy with a person who does not love him? But since you will run the risk, I consent to it; allow me time to speak to her, and reconcile her to this marriage."

The humpback wished for the princess more than for the kingdom; for he already ruled over the one he had just conquered, and he told the king he was not so eager to reign as he imagined, since he had himself signed the agreement that disinherited him in case his brother should ever return, and that he would respect his father's authority, provided he was not prevented marrying Carpillon. The king embraced him, and went to seek the poor princess, who was in great anxiety respecting the result of the interview. Her governess was still with her. She took her into her closet, and crying bitterly: "Is it possible," said she to her, "that after all the promises the king made me, he will have

the cruelty to sacrifice me to this humpback? Certainly, my dear friend, if I must marry him, the day of my marriage will be the last of my life; for it is not so much his deformity that shocks me, as the badness of his heart." "Alas! my princess," replied the governess, "you are ignorant, no doubt, that the daughters of the greatest kings are victims, whose inclination they seldom if ever consult; if they do marry an amiable and handsome prince, they may thank fortune for it; but between one monkey and another, nothing is considered but the interest of the state." Carpillon was about to reply, when it was announced that the king was waiting for her in her chamber. She raised her eyes to heaven to ask for help.

As soon as she saw the king, it was unnecessary for him to explain the resolution he had arrived at; for she had great penetration, and the qualities of her mind far surpassed those of her person. "Ah! sire," she exclaimed, "what are you going to tell me?" "Beautiful princess," said he, "do not look upon your marriage with my son as a misfortune; I intreat of you to consent to it with a good grace; the violence he does to your feelings sufficiently proves the ardour of his own. He could find more than one princess, who would be enchanted to share with him the kingdom he has already, and the one he hopes for after my death; but he will have none but you. Your disdain, your contempt for him, does not dishearten him; and you must believe that he will never omit anything he can do to please you." "I flattered myself I had found a protector in you," replied she; "my hope is gone, you have abandoned me; but the gods—the just gods—will not abandon me." "If you knew all that I have done to defend you from this marriage," added he, "you would be convinced of my friendship. Alas! Heaven gave me a son, whom I dearly loved; his mother nursed him. He was stolen one night from his cradle, and a cat was put in his place, who bit the queen so cruelly that she died of it. If this sweet child had not been taken from me, he would now be the consolation of my old age; my subjects would fear him, and I should offer you my kingdom with him; the humpback, who now assumes the master, would have been happy to be allowed to remain at court. I have lost that dear son, princess, and the misfortune extends to you." "It is I alone," replied she, "who am the cause of what has happened to him. As his existence would have served me, he has perished. Sire, look upon me as guilty; and take my life, rather than marry me." "You were not of an age, beautiful princess," said the king, "at that time, to do either good or ill to any one; I do not accuse you of causing my misfortunes; but if you would not increase them, prepare to receive my son kindly; for he has made himself the strongest here, and could do you most serious injury." She answered only by her tears. The king left her; and as the humpback was impatient to know what was passing, the king found him waiting in his chamber, and told him the Princess Carpillon consented to the marriage, and that he had given the necessary orders for it to be solemnised. The prince was transported with joy; he thanked the king, and immediately sent for jewellers, merchants, and embroiderers. He bought the handsomest things in the world for his mistress, and

sent her large golden baskets, filled with a thousand curiosities. She received them with some appearance of pleasure. He then paid her a visit, and said to her, "Were you not very silly, Madam Carpillon, to refuse the honour I intended you? For, not to say anything of my amiability, I am considered very clever. I will give you so many dresses, so many diamonds, and so many fine things, that no queen in the world shall be comparable to you."

The princess coolly replied, that the misfortunes of her royal house did not allow her to be adorned so much as others were, and therefore she begged of him not to make her such handsome presents. "You would be right," said he to her, "not to adorn yourself, if I did not give you permission; but it is your duty to please me; all will be ready for our marriage in four days; amuse yourself, princess, and give your orders, as you are already absolute mistress here."

After he had left her, she shut herself up with her governess, and told her, that she might choose whether she would find her the means of escape, or those by which she could kill herself the day of her marriage. The governess represented the impossibility of her escaping, and the culpable weakness of killing herself to avoid the evils of this life. She tried to persuade her, that her virtue would contribute to her tranquillity, and without being desperately in love with the humpback she would esteem him sufficiently to live contentedly with him.

Carpillon would not listen to any of her remonstrances; she told her, till now she had relied upon her, she now knew what she had to trust to; that if all the world failed her, she would not fail herself; and that great remedies were required for great evils. After which, she opened the window, and every now and then looked out, without uttering a word. Her governess, who feared she would throw herself out, fell at her feet, and looking affectionately at her, "Well, madam," said she, "what do you wish me to do? I will obey you, though it be at the risk of my life." The princess embraced her, and said, she wished her to purchase for her a shepherdess's dress and a cow; that she would seek refuge wherever she could. That she must not try to turn her from her purpose, because it was losing time, and she had none to spare; that she must also, to enable her to get beyond pursuit, dress up a doll, put it in her bed, and say that she was not well.

"You must see, madam," said the poor governess, "to what I am about to expose myself. Prince Bossu will be certain that I seconded you in your plans; he will inflict a thousand tortures upon me to extort from me where you are, and then he will burn me, or flay me alive. Say after that, that I do not love you."

The princess was very much distressed: "I wish," replied she, "that you should escape yourself two days after me; it will be very easy to deceive everybody till then." In short, they contrived so well, that the same night, Carpillon had a dress and a cow.

All the goddesses that ever descended from the summit of Olympus, those who

sought the shepherd Paris, and a hundred dozen of others, would have appeared less beautiful than Carpillon in this rustic attire. She set out alone, by moonlight, sometimes leading her cow with a cord, sometimes making it carry her; she proceeded at random half dead with fear. If a breath of wind rustled through the bushes, if a bird flew from its nest, or a hare started from its form, she thought thieves or wolves were about to attack her. She walked all night, and would have walked all day, but her cow stopped to feed in a meadow, and the princess, fatigued with her thick wooden shoes, and the weight of her coarse grey cloth dress, sat down upon the grass by the side of a stream, where she took off her yellow linen cap, to arrange her fair hair, which had escaped from all sides, and fell in curls down to her feet. She looked about to see if any one was near her, that she might conceal herself quickly; but, notwithstanding the precautions she took, she was surprised by a lady in complete armour, excepting her head, from which she had taken a golden helmet covered with diamonds. "Shepherdess," said she, "I am fatigued; will you give me some milk from your cow to quench my thirst?" "Willingly, madam," replied Carpillon, "if I had something to put it into." "Here is a cup," said the warrior lady, presenting her a very handsome china one; but the princess knew not how to milk her cow. "How is this?" said the lady; "does your cow give no milk, or do you not know how to milk her?" The princess began to cry, being quite ashamed of appearing so awkward before so extraordinary a person. "I confess, madam," said she to her, "I have only been a short time a shepherdess; all my business is to take my cow out to feed—my mother does the rest." "You have, then, a mother," continued the lady, "and what may she be?" "She keeps a farm," said Carpillon. "Near here?" inquired the lady. "Yes," replied the princess. "Really I feel an affection for her, and am obliged to her for having given birth to so beautiful a daughter. I should like to see her; take me to her." Carpillon did not know how to answer—she was unaccustomed to tell falsehoods, and knew not that she was speaking to a fairy. Fairies were not so common in those days as they have since become. She cast down her eyes; her face was suffused with deep blushes; at last she said, "When I am sent out into the fields, I dare not go home again till night. I beg of you, madam, not to oblige me to do what would make my mother angry, who will beat me, perhaps, if I disobey her."

"Ah! princess, princess," said the fairy smiling, "you cannot support a falsehood—neither can you play the part you have assumed if I do not assist you; take this—it is a bouquet of gillyflowers; be sure that as long as you hold it, the humpback, who is seeking you, will not know you; remember, when you reach the great forest, to ask the shepherds, who feed their flocks there, where Sublime lives; go to him, and tell him that you come from the fairy amazon, who begs he will place you with his wife and daughters. Adieu, beautiful Carpillon, I have been one of your friends for a long time." "Alas! madam," exclaimed the princess, "since you know me, and love me, and I have so much need of your assistance, will you abandon me?" "The bouquet of gillyflowers will not

fail you," replied she; "my moments are precious; I must leave you to fulfil your destiny." In saying these words she vanished from Carpillon's sight, who was so frightened, she thought she should die of it. After recovering herself a little, she continued her journey; not knowing at all where the great forest was; but she said to herself, "This clever fairy, who appears and disappears, who knows me in a peasant's dress, without ever having seen me, will conduct me whither she wishes me to go." Walking or resting, the princess always held her bouquet; she advanced, however, but slowly. Her courage was greater than her strength. Where the road was stony she often stumbled; her feet began to bleed; she was forced to lie down upon the ground under the shelter of some trees; she feared everything, and often thought, with great anxiety, of her governess. It was not without reason that she did think of that poor woman—her zeal and her fidelity have been rarely equalled. She dressed up a large doll, in the princess's lace pinners,[1] fontanges,[2] and fine linen; she went very softly about the chamber, for fear, she said, of disturbing her; and when any noise was made, she scolded everybody. They ran to tell the king that the princess was ill; that did not surprise him: he attributed it to her vexation, and the violence she was doing her own feelings; but, when Prince Bossu heard this sad news, he felt inconceivably grieved, and wanted to see her. The governess with difficulty prevented him. "At all events," said he, "let my physician see her." "Ah, my lord," cried the governess, "it would be enough to kill her—she detests doctors and their remedies; but do not alarm yourself, she only requires a few days' rest—it is a headache, which she will soon sleep off." She managed thus to make him promise not to disturb her mistress, and still kept the doll in the bed. But one night when she was preparing to escape—for she felt assured the impatient prince would soon renew his attempts to enter—she heard him raving like a madman at the door, which he burst open without waiting for her to unlock it.

The cause of this violence was, that the princess's ladies had discovered the fraud, and fearing that they should suffer for it, they instantly went and informed the humpback. It would be impossible to describe the excess of his fury. He rushed to the king, thinking he was in the plot; but by the surprise he evinced, he was sure he was ignorant of it. As soon as the poor governess appeared, he flew at her, and taking her by the hair of her head, "Restore Carpillon to me," said he, "or I will tear out your heart." She only answered by her tears, and throwing herself at his feet, she intreated him to listen to her, but in vain. He dragged her himself into a deep dungeon, where he would have stabbed her a thousand times, if the king, who was as good as his son was wicked, had not obliged him to let her live in this frightful prison.

The amorous and violent prince issued immediate orders to pursue her over land and sea; he set out himself, and rushed in all directions like a man out of his wits. One day, as Carpillon was taking shelter under a large rock with her cow, for the

[1] Cornettes. The pinners, or lappets, sometimes the caps themselves.
[2] Knots of ribbon. See note to page 98.

weather was frightfully bad, and the thunder, lightning, and hail made her tremble, Prince Bossu, and all his followers, who were soaked through by the rain, came and took refuge under the same rock. When she saw him so near her, alas! he frightened her much more than the thunder; she grasped her bunch of gillyflowers with both hands, fearing that one would not be sufficient, and remembering the fairy, exclaimed to herself, "Do not abandon me, charming amazon." The humpback cast his eyes upon her. "What hast thou to fear, decrepit old wretch," said he to her; "if the thunder should kill thee, what wrong would it do thee? Art thou not on the brink of thy grave?" The young princess was not less delighted than astonished to hear herself called old. "No doubt," thought she, "that my little bouquet has worked this wonder," and to avoid being drawn into conversation, she pretended to be deaf. The humpback finding she could not hear, said to his confidant, who never quitted him, "If I were in better spirits, I would take this old woman to the top of the rock, and precipitate her from it, that I might have the pleasure to see her break her neck; for nothing would be more amusing to me." "But, my lord," replied the villain, "if that would at all rejoice you, I will take her there, willingly or by force, and you shall see her body bound like a ball from all the points of the rock, and her blood run close to you." "No," said the prince, "I have not the time; I must continue to seek for this ungrateful woman, who has made my life miserable."

So saying, he put spurs to his horse, and was soon out of sight. It is easy to imagine the princess's joy at his departure; for, most assuredly, the conversation he had just had with his confidant was enough to alarm her: she did not forget to thank the fairy amazon, of whose power she had just had a proof; and continuing her journey she arrived in the plain where the shepherds had built their small cottages; they were very pretty, each of them, with its garden and fountain; the Valley of Tempé, and the borders of the Lignon,[1] have boasted nothing more elegant. The shepherdesses were mostly beautiful, and the shepherds omitted nothing to please them; all the trees were engraved with a thousand different ciphers and love verses. When Carpillon appeared, they left their flocks and followed her respectfully; for they were prepossessed by her beauty and her majestic air; but they were astonished at the poverty of her dress: for, though they lived in a simple and rustic manner, they prided themselves on the neatness of their attire. The princess begged them to inform her which was the house of the shepherd Sublime; they hastened to conduct her thither. She found him seated in a valley with his wife and daughter; a little river flowing at his feet making a soft murmuring noise; he had some sea rushes in his hand, with which he was making a basket to hold fruit; his wife was spinning, and his two daughters were fishing. When Carpillon drew near to them, she was impressed with a respect and affection which surprised her; and when

[1] A little river, which obtained celebrity from D'Urfey's Romance of "Astrée." Madame de Sévigné, in her letter from Vichy of the 8th June, 1676, says, "In these meadows and lovely groves, it is delightful to see the dancing of the remaining shepherds and shepherdesses of the Lignon."

they saw her, they were so affected that they changed colour several times. "I am a poor shepherdess," said she, humbly accosting them, "come to offer you my services from the fairy amazon, whom you know. I hope, out of consideration for her, you will willingly receive me." "My daughter," said the king, rising, and in his turn greeting her, "that great fairy is quite right in believing we have the greatest respect for her; you are, therefore, welcome; and if you had no recommendation but your own, our house would certainly be open to you." "Come hither, beautiful girl," said the queen, holding out her hand, "come, and embrace me. I feel fully disposed to love you; I wish you to look upon me as your mother, and my daughters as your sisters." "Alas! my kind mother," said the princess, "I do not deserve this honour; it is sufficient that I should be your shepherdess, and take charge of your flock." "My daughter," said the king, "we are all equal here; you come with too good a recommendation for us to make any difference between you and our children; come and sit with us, and let your cow feed with our sheep." She made some objection, perseveringly insisting that she only came to take care of the house for them. She would have been very much perplexed had they taken her at her word; but, in fact, it was sufficient to see her, to be satisfied that she was more fit to command than to obey; and they were also certain that one of so much importance as the fairy amazon would not take such interest in an ordinary person.

The king and queen looked at her with astonishment mixed with admiration, difficult to comprehend; they asked her, if she came from a great distance? She said, "Yes." "Whether she had a father and mother?" she said, "No." And to all their questions she answered by monosyllables, as far as respect would permit her. "And what do you call yourself, my child?" said the queen. "They call me Carpillon," said she. "The name is singular," replied the king, "and, perhaps some adventure gave rise to it; it is seldom any one receives such an appellation." She did not reply, and took one of the spindles from the queen, to wind off the thread. When they saw her hands they thought she was taking out of her sleeves two balls of snow formed in that shape; they were so brilliantly white. The king and queen looked at each other very significantly, and said to her, "Your dress is very warm, Carpillon, for the climate we live in, and your wooden shoes are very hard for so young a person as you are; you must be dressed differently." "In my country," replied Carpillon, "they are dressed as I am; but if it pleases you, mother, to order me to do so, I will dress otherwise." They admired her submission, and above all the modesty which appeared in her eyes and pervaded her whole countenance.

Supper time had arrived; they arose, and all entered the house. The two princesses had caught some nice little fish; they had also some new-laid eggs, some milk, and some fruit.

"I am surprised," said the king, "that my son has not returned yet; his love of hunting takes him further than I like, and I am always fearful some accident will happen

to him." "I am as much alarmed as you are," said the queen; "but, if you like, we will wait supper for him." "No," said the king, "we will do nothing of the sort; on the contrary, I beg, when he returns, that no one will speak to him, and that everybody will be very cold to him." "You know how affectionate he is," said the queen, "and that it will distress him so much; he will be ill in consequence." "I cannot help it," said the king; "he must be corrected." They sat down to table, and some time afterwards the prince came in; he had a roebuck on his shoulders, his hair was wet with perspiration, and his face covered with dust. He leaned upon a small spear which he usually carried, his bow was fastened on one side, and his quiver full of arrows on the other. In this state there was something so noble and so haughty in his countenance and in his appearance, that no one could see him without attention and respect. "Mother," said he, addressing the queen, "my wish to bring you this roebuck has caused me a good run over hill and dale to-day." "My son," said the king seriously, "you cause us more anxiety than pleasure. You know all that I have already said about your love for the chase, but you do not seem inclined to correct yourself." The prince reddened; and what annoyed him more was, that he perceived a stranger was present. He replied that another time he would return earlier, or that he would not go hunting any more till they wished it. "That is sufficient," said the queen, who loved him dearly; "my son, I thank you for your present; come and sit by me and sup, for I am sure you are hungry. He was a little disconcerted at the serious air with which the king spoke to him, and he scarcely dared to raise his eyes, for although he was intrepid in the midst of dangers, he was tractable, and stood in great awe of those to whom he owed respect. However, he recovered from his confusion, placed himself next to the queen, and looked at Carpillon, who had not waited so long to look at him. As soon as their eyes met, their hearts beat so wonderfully that they could not account for their agitation. The princess blushed and looked down; the prince continued to gaze at her; again she raised her eyes gently, and looked at him a longer time; they were each of them equally surprised, and thought that nothing in the world could surpass what they beheld. "Is it possible," said the princess, "that seeing so many persons as I have at court, I know not one who could be compared to this young shepherd?" "How is it," said he, in his turn, "that this wonderful girl is a simple shepherdess! Ah, would that I were a king to place her on the throne, to make her mistress of my dominions as she would be of my heart!" Thus musing, he ate nothing; the queen, believing that it was in consequence of his having been unkindly received, loaded him with caresses; she herself handed him some exquisite fruits, of which she was very choice. He begged Carpillon to taste some; she thanked him, and he, without thinking from whose hand he had received them, said sorrowfully, "I don't want them," and coldly left them on the table. The queen did not notice it; but the eldest princess, who by no means disliked him, and could have loved him dearly, but for the difference she believed existed between his condition and hers, remarked it with some degree of vexation.

After supper the king and queen retired; the princesses, as was their custom, arranged everything about the house: the one milked the cows, the other made some cheese. Carpillon was anxious to work also, as the others did, but she had not been so accustomed to it. She could do nothing well, and the two princesses laughingly called her the awkward beauty; but the prince, already in love, assisted her. He went to the well with her, he carried her pitchers, he drew the water for her, and returned heavily laden, for he would not allow her to carry anything. "But what do you mean, shepherd," said she to him; "must I be the young lady here—I, who have worked all my life, am I come here to do nothing?" "You shall do whatever you like, charming shepherdess," replied he; "but do not refuse to accept my poor assistance on these occasions." They returned together, sooner than they wished, for although he hardly dared to speak to her, he was delighted to be with her.

They each of them passed a sleepless night, which their inexperience prevented them from imagining the cause of: but the prince anxiously waited for the hour that he might again behold the shepherdess, while she already feared the time she should again see the shepherd. This new trouble, that the sight of him had thrown her into, diverted her attention from the other sorrows which oppressed her. She thought of him so often, that she scarcely remembered Prince Bossu. "Fickle fortune!" she exclaimed, "why hast thou bestowed so many graces, so fair a countenance, and such charms on a young shepherd, who is only destined to watch his flock; and on a great prince, who has to govern a kingdom, so much malice, ugliness, and deformity?"

Carpillon had never had the curiosity to look at herself since her metamorphosis from a princess into a shepherdess, but now a certain desire to please induced her to seek for a mirror. She found the princesses', and when she saw her headdress, and her gown, she was quite confused. "What a figure!" said she; "what am I like? It is impossible that I can remain any longer buried in this coarse stuff." She took some water, and washed her hands and face. They became whiter than lilies. After this she sought the queen, and kneeling before her, she presented her with a beautiful diamond ring (for she had brought some jewels with her). "My good mother," said she, "some time ago I found this ring; I do not know its value; but I suppose it is worth some money: I beg of you to accept it as a proof of my gratitude for your charity towards me, and I further intreat you to buy me some dresses and linen, that I may appear like the shepherdesses of this country." The queen was surprised to see so beautiful a ring in the possession of this young girl. "I will take care of it for you," said she, "but not accept it; be assured you will have from this morning all that is requisite for you." She then sent to a small town, not very far off, and desired them to bring the prettiest peasant's dress that had ever been seen. The headdress, the shoes, all was complete; thus attired, she appeared more charming than Aurora. The prince also had not been neglectful of himself; he had put round his hat a wreath of flowers; the scarf by which his scrip was tied and his hook were also ornamented with them. He

carried a bouquet to Carpillon, and presented it with the timidity of a lover; she received it with much embarrassment, although she had infinite good sense. Whenever she was with him she hardly ever spoke, and was always in deep thought. It was much the same with him. When he went hunting, instead of pursuing the hinds and the deer that he met with, if he found a fitting spot for indulging in thoughts of the charming Carpillon, he would suddenly stop, and remain in that solitary place, making verses, singing couplets in praise of his shepherdess, talking to the rocks, to the woods, to the trees; he had lost all that joyous spirit which had caused the shepherds so eagerly to seek his company.

But as it is difficult to be much in love and not to fear those whom we love, he was so dreadfully afraid he should offend his shepherdess by declaring his passion for her, that he dare not speak; and although she saw plainly enough that he preferred her to every one else, and that this preference ought to assure her of his sentiments, she was sometimes troubled at his silence, and sometimes she was pleased at it. "If it be true," said she, "that he loves me, how ought I to receive such a declaration? If I am angry with him, I shall perhaps kill him; and if I am not angry with him, I shall die myself of shame and grief. What! born a princess, should I listen to a shepherd? Ah, what unworthy weakness! I will never consent to it; my heart should not change as I change my dress; and I have already many things to reproach myself with since I have been here."

As the prince's natural voice possessed a thousand charms, and as, even if he could not have sung so well, the princess was so prepossessed in his favour she would not have been less pleased to hear him, she often asked him to sing some little songs; and what he sang was so tender, and his accents so touching, she could not break herself of the desire to listen to him. He had written some words, that he repeated incessantly, she being fully aware that she was the subject of them. They are as follows:—

"If a goddess found could be
Who in beauty equall'd thee,
Would she give, my love to win,
All the wealth the world within,
I with scorn would her deny,
At thy feet to live and die."

Although she pretended she paid no more attention to that than she did to others, she could not help evincing a preference for it which gratified the prince. That inspired him with a little more boldness; he purposely repaired to a part of the river-side, shaded by willows and lote-trees,[1] where he knew Carpillon led her lambs every day: he took a bodkin and he wrote upon the bark of a tree:—

"In this spot I view in vain
Peace with all the pleasures reign;
Even here, love robs my breast
Both of happiness and rest."

[1] Alisiers. See note, page 24.

The princess surprised him as he finished these words; he affected to be embarrassed, and after some moments of silence, "You see," said he to her, "an unhappy shepherd, who reveals to the most insensible things the sufferings which he ought to complain of to you only." She did not answer, and casting down her eyes, she afforded him all the time he needed to declare his sentiments. While he was speaking, she considered within herself how she ought to receive that which she heard from lips that were not indifferent to her, and her liking for him readily found an excuse—"He is ignorant of my birth," said she; "his temerity is pardonable; he loves me, and thinks not that I am his superior. Even if he knew my rank, the gods, who are so high above us, do they not covet human hearts? Are they angry because men love them? Shepherd," said she, when he had ceased speaking, "I pity you, it is all I can. I will not love you; I have already too many other troubles. Alas! what would become of me, if, to complete my misfortunes, the troubles of love should be added to them?" "Ah, shepherdess, say rather," cried he, "that if you have sorrows, nothing would more surely alleviate them; I should share them all with you, my only thought would be to please you, and you could trust me with the care of your flock." "Would to heaven," said she, "I had no other cause for uneasiness." "Can you have any others?" said he most earnestly; "a being so beautiful, so young, without ambition, unacquainted with the vain grandeurs of a court? But no doubt you love some one here; a rival makes you inexorable to me." In uttering these words, he changed colour; he became sad, for this thought distressed him cruelly. "I will admit you have a hated and detested rival; you would never have seen me, had I not been obliged to fly from his pressing importunities." "Perhaps, shepherdess, you will fly from me, for the same reason; for if you hate him simply for loving you, I must be in your eyes the most hateful of men." "Whether I do not think so," replied she, "or that I look upon you more favourably, I feel I should not go so far to avoid you, as I should to avoid him." The shepherd was transported with joy by these kind words, and from that day, what pains he took to please the princess!

Every morning he employed himself in seeking for the most beautiful flowers to make into garlands for her; he adorned her crook with a thousand different coloured ribbons; he would not allow her to be exposed to the sun; as soon as she came with her flock to the river-side, or in the woods, he twined branches, tied them quickly together, and made arbours with them, under which the turf formed natural couches to repose on. All the trees bore her ciphers; he had carved verses upon them that spoke but of Carpillon's beauty; he sang but of her; and the young princess observed all these tokens of the shepherd's passion for her sometimes with pleasure, sometimes with much uneasiness. She loved him, without being quite aware of it; she dared not question herself on the subject, fearing she should find herself too fond of him: but when we entertain such fear, are we not already certain of the fact?

The attachment of the young shepherd for the young shepherdess was no secret;

everybody saw it, and approved of it; who could blame it, in a place where all the world loved. They appeared, it was said, born for each other; they were both perfect; they were masterpieces of the gods, which fortune had confided to their little country, and everything should be done to retain them in it. Carpillon felt a secret joy in hearing from every one the praises of the shepherd she thought so charming; and whenever she reflected on the difference of their rank she grieved, and resolved to remain unknown, that her heart might be more at liberty.

The king and queen, who loved her very much, were not at all displeased at this growing affection; they looked upon the prince as though he were their son, and the many perfections of the princess were scarcely less charming to them than to him. "Was it not the amazon who sent her to us?" said they; "and did she not also come and fight the centaur in favour of the boy? No doubt this wise fairy has destined them for each other; we must wait her orders thereupon, and follow them."

Matters were in this condition, the prince still complaining of Carpillon's indifference to him—for she carefully concealed her sentiments from him—when, as he was hunting one day, he was unexpectedly attacked by a ferocious bear, who, rushing suddenly from the cavity of a rock, threw himself upon him, and would have devoured him had he not been as dexterous as he was brave. After struggling for a long time upon the summit of the mountain, they rolled to the bottom without quitting their hold. Carpillon was standing near the spot with several of her companions. They could not see what was passing above them; but what was the terror of these young girls, when they perceived a man and a bear falling headlong down together! The princess immediately recognised her shepherd. She uttered shrieks of terror and anguish All the shepherdesses took flight; she remained sole spectatress of the combat; she even boldly thrust the iron of her crook in the terrible animal's mouth, and love gave her strength to render some assistance to her lover. When he saw her, the fear she might be involved in his danger augmented his courage to such a degree, that he thought not of his own life, provided that he could save that of his shepherdess. At last he killed the bear close to her feet, but he felt himself half dead with the wounds which he had received. Ah, what was her misery when she saw his clothes stained with his flowing blood! She could not speak; the tears gushed from her eyes; she placed his head upon her knees, then with a sudden effort, "Shepherd," said she to him, "if you die, I shall die with you. In vain have I concealed from you the secrets of my heart; know them now, and be assured that my life is devoted to you." "What can I wish for more, lovely shepherdess?" said he; "whatever may now befall me, my fate must still be a happy one."

The shepherdesses who had fled now returned with several shepherds, to whom they had related what they had just seen. They hastened to assist the prince and princess: for she needed assistance nearly as much as he did. Whilst they were cutting the branches of trees to make a kind of litter, the fairy amazon appeared in the midst of them. "Do not be uneasy," said she to them; "let me touch the young shepherd."

She took him by the hand, and placing her gold helmet on his head, "I forbid thee to be ill, dear shepherd," said she to him. He arose instantly; and the vizor of the helmet being open, displayed to them his fine features full of heroic expression, and his keen and brilliant eyes confirming the hopes the fairy had inspired them with. He was astonished at the manner in which she had just cured him, and at her majestic appearance. Transported with admiration, with joy, and with gratitude, he threw himself at her feet. "Great queen," said he to her, "I was dangerously wounded: a look from you, a word from your mouth, has cured me: but, alas! I have a wound in my heart of which I would not be cured: deign but to assuage its pain, and improve my fortune, that I may be able to share it with this lovely shepherdess." The princess blushed at hearing him speak thus; for she was aware the fairy amazon knew her, and she was afraid she should be blamed by her, for holding out hopes to a lover so much beneath herself: she dared not look at her. The sighs that escaped her moved the fairy's compassion. "Carpillon," said she, "this shepherd is not unworthy of your esteem; and you, shepherd, so desirous to change your state, rest assured that in a short time a very great change will take place in it." Having uttered these words, she disappeared as usual.

The shepherds and shepherdesses, who had hastened to assist them, conducted them in triumph to their village. They placed the lovers in the midst of them, and having crowned them with flowers, in honour of the victory they had just achieved over the terrible bear—which they dragged after them—they sang these words upon the affection Carpillon had shown for the prince:—

"Greater pleasure yet will reign
In these enchanting groves;
Here a shepherd's charms detain
The daughter of the loves."

In this manner they brought them home to Sublime, to whom they related all that had just happened—with what courage the shepherd had defended himself against the bear; and how nobly the shepherdess had aided him in the combat; and lastly, what the fairy amazon had done for him. The king, delighted at this recital, ran to tell the queen. "Undoubtedly," said he, "this boy and girl have no common blood in them; their eminent perfections, their beauty, and the care that the fairy amazon takes of them, prove there is something extraordinary relating to them." All at once the queen remembered the diamond ring Carpillon had given her. "I always forgot," said she, "to show you a ring that this young shepherdess put into my hands with an air of uncommon dignity, begging me to accept it, and to give her in exchange for it some dresses like those they wear in this country." "Is the stone a fine one?" inquired the king. "I have scarcely looked at it," added the queen; "but here it is." She presented him with the ring; and as soon as he looked at it, "Ye gods, what do I see!" cried he. "What! did you not remember a gift I received from your own hands?" At the same time he pressed a little spring, of which he knew the secret. The diamond flew up, and the queen saw her portrait, that she had had painted for the

king, and that she had tied round the neck of her little daughter to play with, when she was nursing her in the tower. "Ah! sire," said she, "what strange adventure is this? It renews all my griefs. However, let us speak to the shepherdess; we must try to know more about it."

She called her, and said, "My child, I have waited till this time for an admission from you, which would have given us much greater pleasure if you had made it without being urged to do so; but since you continue to hide from us who you are, it is right to tell you that we know, and that the ring you gave us has solved the enigma." "Alas, my mother," replied the princess, throwing herself upon her knees before her, "it was not from a want of confidence that I persisted in hiding my rank from you: I thought it would distress you to see a princess in the condition that I am. My father was king of the Peaceful Islands: his reign was troubled by a usurper, who confined him in a tower, with the queen, my mother. After three years of captivity, they procured means of escape; one of the guards assisted them. They lowered me, favoured by the darkness of night, in a basket. The cord broke. I fell into the lake, without their knowing whether I was drowned or not. Some fishermen who had thrown out their nets to catch carp, found me entangled in them. My size and weight induced them to think it was one of the largest carp that was in the lake. These hopes vanished when they saw me. They thought they would throw me into the water again to feed the fishes, but finally they left me in the nets, and carried me to the tyrant, who instantly knew by the flight of my family that I was an unfortunate little princess, quite forsaken. His wife, who had never had any children, had pity on me. She took me herself, and brought me up under the name of Carpillon. She perhaps wished me to forget my birth, but my heart always told me who I was; and sometimes it is a misfortune to possess feelings that conform so little to one's situation. However that might be, a prince, named Bossu, came and conquered the usurper who deprived my father of the kingdom he was enjoying so peacefully. This removal of the tyrant made it worse for me. Prince Bossu carried me off as one of the brightest ornaments of his triumph, and resolved to marry me against my inclination. In so great an extremity I determined to fly by myself, dressed as a shepherdess, and leading my cow. Prince Bossu, who sought for me everywhere, and who overtook me, would no doubt have known me, if the fairy amazon had not generously given me a bouquet of gillyflowers, on purpose to protect me from my enemies. She was equally kind in sending me to you, my good mother," continued the princess; "and if I did not declare my rank sooner to you, it was not from want of confidence, but only with the view of sparing you trouble. Not that I complain," continued she; "I never knew happiness till the day you received me; and I assure you I find a rural life so sweet and innocent, that I do not hesitate to prefer it to that which they lead at court."

She spoke so earnestly she did not perceive that the queen was dissolved in tears, and the king's eyes were also full of them; but as soon as she had finished, they

hastened to embrace her, and held her in their arms some time without speaking a word. She was as much affected as they were; she wept as they did; and it would be difficult to describe the mingled pain and pleasure that agitated these three illustrious and unfortunate persons. At last the queen, making an effort to speak, said to her, "Is it possible, dear child of my soul, that after having so long and deeply regretted thy sad loss, the gods have restored thee to thy mother, to console her in her misfortunes? Yes, my daughter, thou seest her who bore thee, and nursed thee in thy earliest infancy. Behold the author of thy being. Oh, light of our eyes! Oh, princess! whom the wrath of heaven deprived us of; with what transports shall we celebrate thy blessed return!" "And I, my illustrious mother, and I, my dear queen," cried the princess, throwing herself at her feet, "by what words, by what actions can I express to you both, all that the respect and love I owe you causes me to feel at this moment? Thou dear refuge from all my troubles, I find thee, just as I had ceased to flatter myself with hope!" They renewed their embraces, and thus they passed some hours. Carpillon then withdrew. Her father and mother desired her not to mention what had just transpired, for they were apprehensive of the curiosity of the shepherds of that country; and as they were for the most part rather unpolished, it was to be feared they would try to discover secrets which did not concern them.

The princess was silent on the subject to her companions in general, but she could not keep the secret from her young shepherd. How can we refrain from trusting those we love? She had reproached herself a thousand times for concealing from him her birth. "What obligations," said she, "would he not have felt under to me, had he known that, being born to a throne, I had humbled myself to him? Yet, alas! love makes little difference between the sceptre and the crook! Can the imaginary greatness, so much boasted of, actually possess the soul and satisfy it? No; virtue alone has the right to do so. She places us above the throne, and can detach us from it; the shepherd who loves me is wise, witty, and amiable. In what can a prince be superior to him?"

As she indulged in these reflections, she saw him at her feet; he had followed her to the river-side: and presenting her with a garland of flowers of a charming variety, he said, "Whence came you, lovely shepherdess? For hours have I been seeking you, and impatiently awaiting your arrival." "Shepherd," said she, "I have been occupied by a wonderful adventure. I should reproach myself did I conceal it from you; but remember, that this mark of my confidence binds you to everlasting secresy. I am a princess, my father was a king, whom I have just discovered in the person of Sublime."

The prince was so astounded and agitated at this revelation that he had not the power to interrupt her, while she related to him, in the kindest manner, her whole history. What reason had he not to fear that the good shepherd who had educated him would, being a king, refuse him his daughter, or that she herself, reflecting upon the difference between a great princess and himself, would one day withdraw from him the kindness she had at first shown him! "Ah, madam," said he mournfully, "I am a lost

man: I must die! You are born to a throne; you have found your parents: and I am an unfortunate being who knows neither his country nor his kindred. An eagle was my fostermother, and her nest my cradle; if you have deigned to look upon me favourably, you will be advised to think of me no longer." The princess mused for a moment, and, without answering him, she took a bodkin which kept up part of her beautiful hair, and wrote upon the bark of a tree:—

"Canst thou love for love return?"

The prince instantly wrote these words:—

"With a thousand flames I burn."

The princess added underneath:—

"Cease then, shepherd, to complain;
Love, and be beloved again."

The prince, transported with joy, threw himself at her feet, and seizing one of her hands said, "You ease my afflicted heart, adorable princess, and by these new acts of kindness you preserve my life. Remember what you have just written in my favour." "I am not likely to forget it," said she with a gracious smile; "rely upon my heart, it is more interested in your behalf than in my own." Their conversation would have lasted much longer, if they had had more time; but, as they had to collect the flocks they were tending, they hastened to return.

Meanwhile, the king and queen were conferring together on the course they should pursue respecting Carpillon and the young shepherd. As long as she was a stranger to them, they approved of the gentle flame that was gradually kindling in their bosoms. The perfect beauty with which heaven had endowed them, their intellect, the grace which distinguished all their actions, made them desire that their union should be lasting; but they looked upon it with a very different eye, when they considered she was their daughter, and that the shepherd was without doubt only an unfortunate child, whose parents had exposed him to wild beasts, to save themselves the trouble of bringing him up. Finally, they resolved to tell Carpillon she must no longer encourage the hopes the youth had flattered himself with; and that she must even seriously declare to him that it was not her wish to establish herself in that country.

The queen called her early in the morning, and spoke with much kindness to her. But what words are capable of calming a grief so violent? The princess vainly endeavoured to constrain her feelings; her face now suffused with burning blushes, now paler than if she had been on the point of death; her eyes lustreless from sorrow, too plainly indicated the state of her heart. Ah! how much she regretted her confession! She assured her mother, however, with great submission, that she would follow her injunctions. She had scarcely strength to throw herself on her bed, where, bathed in tears, she uttered a thousand complaints and a thousand regrets. At last she arose to lead her sheep to feed; but instead of going near the river, she plunged into the wood, where, lying down upon some moss, she leaned her head upon her hand and fell into a deep

reverie. The prince, who could not rest without her, ran to seek her, and suddenly stood before her. At sight of him she uttered a loud shriek, as if taken by surprise, and rising hastily rushed from him without looking at him; he remained for a moment motionless at so unusual a proceeding, then following and stopping her, said, "How, shepherdess! after giving me my death-blow, would you deprive yourself of the pleasure of seeing me die? You have already changed towards your shepherd; do you no longer remember what you promised him yesterday?" "Alas," said she, looking mournfully at him, "alas, what crime do you accuse me of? I am wretched. Commands have been laid upon me which it will be impossible to evade. Pity me, and do not approach me wherever I may be. It must be so." "It must be so!" cried he, folding his arms in despair. "Must I fly from you, divine princess? Can so cruel and so unjust an order be pronounced by you to me? Would you drive me mad? And this flattering hope, to which you allowed me to abandon myself, can it be extinguished while I live?" Carpillon, as heart-stricken as her lover, sank on the ground speechless and motionless; at this sight he was agitated by a thousand different thoughts. The state in which he saw his mistress sufficiently proved the compulsion under which she acted, and this certainly in a great measure diminished his grief.

He lost not a moment in endeavouring to revive her; a spring that flowed gently amongst the grass provided him with water to sprinkle on the face of his shepherdess, and some cupids who were hidden behind a bush have asserted to their companions that he dared to steal a kiss. However that might be, she soon opened her eyes, then repulsing her amiable shepherd, "Fly! Avoid me!" said she; "if my mother should come, would she not have cause to be angry?" "Should I then have left you to be devoured by bears and wolves?" said he; "or during a long swoon, alone in these solitary places, to be stung by some asp, or serpent?" "I must risk everything," she said, "rather than displease the queen."

During this affecting and tender interview, the fairy, their protectress, suddenly appeared in the king's chamber: she was armed as usual; the gems with which her cuirass and helmet were covered were less brilliant than her eyes: addressing herself to the queen, she said: "You are not too grateful, madam, for the present I made you, in restoring you your daughter, who would have been drowned in the nets without my assistance, since you are about to cause the death of the shepherd I confided to your care. Think no longer of the difference that may perhaps exist between him and Carpillon; it is time they should be united. Prepare, illustrious Sublime," said she to the king, "for their marriage—I desire it—and you will never have cause to repent it." With these words, and not waiting for their reply, she left them, leaving only a long stream of light behind her as she disappeared, resembling the rays of the sun.

The king and queen were equally astonished and delighted that the fairy's commands were so positive. "One cannot doubt," said the king, "that this unknown shepherd is of an equal birth with Carpillon: his protectress is too noble to wish to unite two

persons unsuitable to each other. It is she, as you perceive, who saved our daughter from perishing in the lake. How have we deserved her favour?" "I have always heard say," replied the queen, "there are good and bad fairies, that they take a liking or an aversion to a family according to their humour, and evidently the fairy amazon favours us." They were still in conversation, when the princess returned dejected and suffering. The prince, who dared not follow her but at a distance, arrived some time after, so melancholy, that a glance at his features was sufficient to show what was passing in his mind. During the whole meal these poor lovers, who were wont to be the joy of the house, did not utter a word; nor even venture to raise their eyes.

As soon as they rose from table, the king went into his little garden, and desired the shepherd to follow him. At this order, he turned pale. A strange shivering ran through all his veins, and Carpillon believing her father was going to send him away, was no less alarmed than he was. Sublime entered an arbour, seated himself, and looking at the prince, he said, "My son, you know with what affection I have brought you up. I have looked upon you as a present from the gods, to support and console me in my old age; but what will best prove my regard for you, is the choice I have made of you for my daughter Carpillon; she of whom you have often heard me deplore the loss. Heaven, who has restored her to me, wills that she should be your wife. I desire it also with all my heart. Will you be the only one to object to it?" "Ah, my father," cried the prince, throwing himself at his feet, "dare I flatter myself with what I hear? Am I so happy, that your choice falls upon me? Or do you merely wish to discover my sentiments with respect to this lovely shepherdess?" "No, my dear son," said the king, "do not hesitate between hope and fear; I am resolved in a few days to celebrate your nuptials." "You overwhelm me with kindness," replied the prince, embracing his knees; "and if I but poorly express my gratitude to you, it is from the excess of my joy." The king forced him to rise, said a thousand kind things to him, and although he did not tell him of his high rank, he gave him to understand his birth was far above the condition fortune had reduced him to.

But Carpillon, a prey to her anxiety, could not refrain from following her father and her lover into the garden. She watched them at a distance, hidden behind some trees: when she saw him at the king's feet, she so fully believed he was intreating him not to sentence him to so cruel a separation, that she would stay to learn no more; she flew into the depths of the forest, running like a fawn, that the hounds and hunters were pursuing; she feared nothing—neither the ferocity of the wild beasts, nor the thorns, which caught her on all sides. The echoes repeated her sad lamentations; she seemed only bent on seeking death; when the shepherd, impatient to impart to her the good tidings he had just heard, hastened in search of her. "Where are you, my shepherdess, my charming Carpillon?" cried he; "if you hear me, fly not. Happiness awaits us."

As he uttered these words, he perceived her far down in a valley, surrounded by several huntsmen, who were endeavouring to place her on a horse behind a little

humpbacked and deformed man. At this sight, and the shrieks of his mistress for assistance, he flew towards her like an arrow from a bow; having no arms but his sling, he hurled a stone, which struck the man who was carrying off the shepherdess so direct and terrible a blow, that he fell from his horse, with a dreadful wound in the head.

Carpillon fell with him; the prince was already near her, trying to defend her against her ravishers; but all his resistance was in vain; they seized him, and would have strangled him upon the spot, if Prince Bossu—for it was he—had not made signs to spare him: "For," said he, "he shall be put to death with every variety of torture." They contented themselves, therefore, with binding his arms with thick cords; and the same cords served to secure the princess, so that they were enabled to talk to each other.

At the same time they made a sort of litter to carry the wicked humpback upon. As soon as it was finished, they all departed, without any of the shepherds being aware of the misfortune that had happened to our young lovers, and so giving information to Sublime. It is easy to imagine his uneasiness when night came and they did not return. The queen was equally alarmed, and they passed several days in company with all the shepherds of the country in seeking and deploring them in vain.

You must know that Prince Bossu had never forgotten the Princess Carpillon, but time had weakened his passion; and when he was not amusing himself by committing a few murders, and cutting without distinction the throats of all those who displeased him, he went hunting, and it was sometimes seven or eight days before he returned. He was out on one of these long hunting expeditions, when he suddenly caught sight of the princess crossing a path. Her grief was so acute, and she cared so little what might happen to her, that she had not taken with her her bouquet of gillyflowers, consequently he knew her the moment he saw her.

"Oh, of all the misfortunes this is the greatest!" said the shepherd, in a low voice, to his shepherdess. "Alas! we were just upon the eve of being united for ever." He then related what had passed between Sublime and himself. It is easy to comprehend Carpillon's regret. "I have then cost you your life," said she, bursting into tears. "I lead you myself to death, you for whom I would shed my last drop of blood. I am the cause of the misfortune that overwhelms you, and through my own imprudence I have again fallen into the barbarous hands of my most cruel persecutor!"

They talked thus to each other till they reached the city, where the good old king resided, the father of the horrible humpback. He was informed they had brought his son home on a litter, as a young shepherd, in defending his shepherdess, had struck him with a stone from his sling with so much force, that he was dangerously wounded. At these tidings the king, shocked to learn his only son was in this state, ordered them to put the shepherd in prison. The humpback gave a secret order that Carpillon should be treated in like manner. He had resolved, either that she should marry him, or that she should be tortured to death, so that the lovers were separated only by an ill-made door, through the chinks of which they had the sad consolation of seeing each other

while it was broad daylight, and the rest of the day and night they could converse together.

What did they not say that was affectionate and loving to each other! All that the heart could feel, or the mind imagine, they expressed in such touching terms, that they were bathed in tears; and perhaps the reader would be equally affected if we repeated them.

The confidants of the humpback came every day to see the princess, and threaten her with speedy execution if she did not purchase her life by consenting with a good grace to marry him. She received these propositions with a firmness, and an air of defiance, that made them despair of success in their undertaking; and as soon as she could speak to the prince she said, "Fear not, my shepherd, that the dread of the most cruel tortures will shake my constancy; we will die, since we cannot live, together." "Do you hope then to comfort me, beautiful princess?" said he. "Alas! would I not rather see you in that monster's arms than in the hands of the executioner with which he threatens you?" She chided him for such sentiments, accused him of weakness, and assured him again and again that she would show him how to die with courage.

The humpback's wound being nearly healed, his love, irritated by the continual refusals of the princess, made him determined to sacrifice to his rage the shepherd who had so ill-used him. He fixed the day for this dismal tragedy, and invited the king, with all his senators, and the grandees of the kingdom, to come and witness it. He was there in an uncovered litter to feast his eyes upon all the horrors of the spectacle. The king, as I said before, did not know that the Princess Carpillon was a prisoner; so that when he saw her dragged to execution, with her poor governess, whom the humpback had condemned also, and the young shepherd more beautiful than the day, he commanded that they should be brought upon the terrace, where he was surrounded by the whole court.

He did not wait for the princess to complain of the unworthy treatment she had received, but hastened to cut the cords with which she was bound; and then, looking at the young shepherd, he felt a yearning of tenderness and pity for him. "Rash youth," said he, endeavouring to speak harshly to him, "who inspired thee with boldness enough to attack a great prince, and nearly deprive him of existence!" The shepherd, at the sight of this venerable old man in his royal robes, was on his part inspired with feelings of respect and confidence that he had never experienced before. "Great monarch," said he, with admirable calmness, "the peril in which I saw this beautiful princess was the cause of my rashness. I did not know your son, and how should I recognise a prince in an action so violent and unworthy his rank?" As he spoke his voice and action became more animated, his arm was uncovered, the mark of the arrow that was on it was too visible for the king not to observe it. "Oh, heavens!" cried he, "am I deceived, or do I find in thee the dear son that I had lost?" "No, great King," said the fairy amazon, appearing high in the air, and mounted upon a superb

winged horse, "no, you are not deceived; behold your son! I protected him in the eagle's nest, where his cruel brother caused him to be placed. Let that son now console you for the loss of the other." With these words she rushed upon the guilty humpback, and, piercing him to the heart with her fiery lance, she did not allow him much time to contemplate the horrors of death, for he was consumed as though it had been by lightning.

She then approached the terrace, and presented the prince with weapons and armour. "I promised them to thee," said she; "thou shalt be invulnerable with them, and the greatest warrior in the world." Immediately was heard the flourish of a thousand trumpets and all sorts of warlike instruments imaginable; but these sounds were shortly succeeded by a soft symphony, to which melodious voices sang the praises of the prince and princess. The fairy amazon dismounted from her horse, placed herself beside the king, and begged him to order immediately all that was required for the celebration of the marriage of the prince and princess. She commanded a little fairy, who appeared as soon as she called her, to go for the shepherd king, the queen, and her daughters, and to return with them instantly. Immediately the fairy disappeared, and returned as quickly with the illustrious exiles. What happiness after so many afflictions! The palace resounded with shouts of joy, and nothing was ever equal to that of these sovereigns and their children. The fairy amazon gave her orders in every direction. One word of hers did more work than a hundred thousand people. The nuptials were celebrated with greater magnificence than had ever been seen previously. King Sublime returned to his dominions; Carpillon had the gratification of conducting him thither with her husband. The old king, enchanted to have a son so worthy of his affection, became young again; at all events, he was so happy in his old age, that he lived much longer in consequence.

"Youth is the season when the human heart
By master minds can moulded be with ease;
As to soft wax the fingers can impart
By gentle pressure any form they please.

"Then may the future man be lost or saved:
The vice that stains—the virtue that may grace it—
Once on the heart in infancy engraved,
Rarely in after years can aught efface it.

"On life's uncertain sea, in early age,
Happy is he who spreads his hopeful sail
Under the guidance of a pilot sage,
Who knows the shoals, and can foresee the gale.

"The prince, whose portrait I have tried to take,
Had nought of quicksand or of storm to dread;
A prosperous voyage he scarce could fail to make
While by the royal shepherd piloted.

"'Tis true that love was not to be defied:
But hence, ye censors who the youth would blame.
Let Reason only the affections guide,
And Love lend lustre to the hero's fame!"

# THE BENEFICENT FROG

ONCE upon a time there was a king, who for a long while maintained a war against his neighbours. After several battles they besieged his capital city. He was anxious about the queen, who was near her confinement, and he intreated her to retire to a castle that he had fortified, and where he had never been but once. The queen employed prayers and tears to persuade him to allow her to remain near him. She wished to share his fate, and uttered piercing cries when he placed her in her chariot to depart. However, he commanded his guards to accompany her, and promised her to steal away as secretly as he could to visit her. He flattered her with this hope; for the castle was far off, surrounded by a thick forest, and without knowing the roads well, there was no getting to it.

The queen set out, very sorrowful at leaving her husband to the dangers of the war; they travelled with her by short stages, fearing she would be fatigued by so long a journey; at length she arrived at her castle very uneasy and melancholy. After she was sufficiently rested, she wished to make excursions in the neighbourhood; but she found nothing that could amuse her. She looked all around her; she saw immense deserts, which rather increased than diminished her sorrow. She looked at them sadly, and sometimes said, "What a difference between this abode and the one I have been in all my life. If I stay here much longer, I shall die. Who is there to talk to in these solitary places? To whom can I unburden my heart? and what have I done to the king that he should banish me? It seems as though he would make me feel all the bitterness of his absence, when he sends me away to this horrid castle."

Such were the lamentations she indulged in; and although the king wrote to her every day, and gave her good news of the siege, she became more and more miserable, and was determined to return to him; but as the officers he had placed about her were ordered not to return with her unless he sent a courier expressly for her, she gave them no hint of her intention. She had a little chariot made just large enough for herself, on the pretence that she meant to hunt occasionally. She drove it herself, and followed the dogs so close, that the huntsmen could not keep up with her. By these means she became perfect mistress of her chariot, and was in a position to go wherever she liked. There was but one difficulty, which was her ignorance of the roads in the forest; but she flattered herself the gods would protect her on her journey: and after offering them

a few sacrifices, she announced her intention to have a grand hunt, at which she requested everybody would be present; that she would go in her chariot, and that each person should take a different route, that there should be no escape for the wild beasts. They separated accordingly. The young queen, who thought she should soon see her husband again, had dressed herself to great advantage. Her capeline[1] was covered with feathers of different colours, her vest ornamented with jewels; and her beauty, which was uncommon, made her appear like a second Diana. While her suite were occupied in the pleasures of the chase, she gave her horses their heads, urging them to speed by her voice and a few touches of the whip. From a fast trot they soon broke into a gallop, and finally took the bits between their teeth. The chariot seemed whirled onward by the winds. The eye could scarcely follow it. The poor queen too late repented her temerity. "What have I undertaken?" said she. "How is it possible for me to guide horses so spirited and unmanageable? Alas! what will become of me? Ah, if the king thought I was in such danger as this, what would be his feelings! he who loves me so dearly, and who only sent me from the capital to place me in greater security. How have I repaid his tender care of me! and this dear child yet unborn will be also the victim of my imprudence." The air resounded with her sad lamentations. She invoked the gods, she called the fairies to her assistance; but the gods and the fairies had abandoned her. The chariot was overturned; she had not strength enough to jump out quickly; her foot was caught between the wheel and the axletree. It may be easily imagined that it was by nothing less than a miracle that she escaped with life from so terrible an accident.

She was left prostrate on the ground at the foot of a tree, insensible and speechless, her face covered with blood. She remained in this condition for a long time. When she opened her eyes, she saw standing beside her a woman of a gigantic size, clothed

[1] A low-crowned hat.

only in a lion's hide. Her arms and legs were naked, her hair tied together with the dried skin of a serpent, the head of which hung upon her shoulders. She had a stone club in her hand, which served as a staff for her to lean upon; and a quiver full of arrows at her side. So extraordinary a figure convinced the queen that she was dead; for after so serious an accident, she did not imagine she could be still alive; and in a low tone she said: "I am not at all surprised that mortals are so unwilling to die; what one sees in the other world is very frightful." The giantess, who was listening to her, could not help laughing at the idea of the queen's thinking she was dead. "Recover thy senses," said she to her; "know that thou art still among the living, but thy fate will scarcely be less sad. I am the fairy lioness, who dwells hard by; you must come and pass your days with me." The queen looked sorrowfully at her, and said, "If you would take me back to my castle, madam lioness, and inform the king what price he must pay for my ransom, he loves me so dearly that he would not even refuse you the half of his kingdom." "No," replied the fairy, "I am sufficiently rich. I have for some time been very dull, living alone: thou hast some wit, perhaps thou mayest amuse me." In saying this, she changed herself into a lioness, and placing the queen upon her back, she carried her down to the bottom of her terrible grotto. As soon as she reached it, she cured her of the hurts she had received, by rubbing her with a peculiar liquid.

How astonished and distressed was the poor queen to find herself in this frightful abode! The descent to it was by ten thousand steps, which led to the very centre of the earth. There was no other light there, but that from several large lamps, which was reflected by a lake of quicksilver. This lake was covered with monsters, whose various forms might have terrified a more courageous queen. Great owls, screech-owls, ravens, and other birds of sinister omen, were to be heard there; and in the distance could be seen a mountain, from which trickled waters into an all but stagnant pool. These were all the tears that had ever been shed by unfortunate lovers, and collected in reservoirs by compassionating cupids. The trees had neither leaves nor fruit; the ground was covered with briars and nettles.[1] The food was suitable to the climate of so hateful a country. Dried roots, horse-chestnuts, and the berries of the wild briars, were all that could be found to relieve the hunger of the unfortunate beings who fell into the hands of the fairy lioness.

As soon as the queen was able to work, the fairy told her she might build herself a hut, as she would have to remain with her all her life. At these words the queen could not refrain from crying. "Ah! what have I done to you," exclaimed she, "that you should keep me here? If my death, which I feel approaching, will afford you any pleasure, kill me at once, it is all I venture to hope for from your pity; but do not condemn me to a long and wretched existence apart from my husband." The lioness

[1] I have omitted here the word soucis, as I could not convey in English the double meaning of "marigolds" and "cares," which it possesses in the original.

ridiculed her distress, and told her she would advise her to dry up her tears, and try to please her; that if she did otherwise, she would be the most miserable person in the world. "What must I do then," said the queen, "to soften your heart?" "I am very fond," said the fairy, "of fly-pies. It is my desire that you find means of catching enough flies to make a large and excellent pie." "But," said the queen, "I do not see any here; and if there were any, it is not light enough to catch them; and if I had caught them, I never made pastry: so that you give me an order that I cannot execute." "No matter," said the merciless lioness, "I will have what I order."

The queen made no reply. She thought that in spite of the cruel fairy, she had but one life to lose, and in her wretched situation, what had she to fear? Instead then of seeking for flies, she sat herself down under a yew-tree, and thus began her sorrowful lamentations: "What will be your distress, my dear husband," said she, "when you seek and cannot find me! You will imagine I am dead, or unfaithful; and I would rather you deplored the loss of my life, than of my affection. They will find perchance in the forest the fragments of my chariot, and all the ornaments that I wore in the hope of pleasing you; at such a sight you will no longer doubt that I am dead; and how can I be certain that you will not give to another my place in your heart? But at all events, I shall not know it, for I am never to return to the world." She would have continued a long time, lamenting in this manner, if she had not heard over her head the mournful croaking of a raven. She raised her eyes, and by favour of the little light that glimmered on the bank, she saw a large raven with a frog in its claws, and evincing a decided intention of eating it quickly. "Although there is nothing here to relieve me," said she, "I will not neglect to save a poor frog, who is in as much distress in its way as I am in mine." She caught up the first stick she could find, and made the raven abandon its prey. The frog fell to the ground, remained for some time stupefied, then, recovering its frogish senses, said, "Beautiful queen, you are the only kind-hearted person I have seen in these regions since my curiosity led me to them." "By what miracle are you able to speak, little frog?" said the queen;

"and who are the persons you have seen here? For as yet I have not seen any." "All the monsters with which this lake is covered," replied the little frog, "have once been in the world; some of them kings, others in the confidence of their sovereigns; there are even some here who have been the mistresses of kings, and cost the state much precious blood. They are those whom you see metamorphosed into leeches. Fate sends them hither for a certain time, but none of them return any better, or correct themselves of their faults." "I can easily understand," said the queen, "that the herding of many wicked people together, would not tend to their reformation; but with regard to yourself, good gossip frog, what do you do here?" "Curiosity induced me to come hither," replied she; "I am half a fairy; my power is limited in certain things, and very extensive in others; if the fairy lioness recognised me in her dominions, she would kill me."

"How is it possible," said the queen, "that being a fairy, or half a fairy, a raven was about to eat you?" "Two words will make you understand it," replied the frog; "when I have my little hood of roses on my head, in the which consists my greatest power, I fear nothing: but unfortunately I had left it in the marsh when this wicked raven pounced upon me. I confess, madam, but for you I should be no more; and since I owe my life to you, if I can do anything to comfort yours, you may command me in any way you please." "Alas! my dear frog," said the queen, "the wicked fairy, who holds me captive, wants me to make her a fly-pasty; there are no flies here, and even were there any, one cannot see well enough to catch them, and I run a great risk of being beaten to death." "Leave it to me," said the frog, "I will provide you with plenty before long." She immediately rubbed herself with sugar, and more than six thousand frogs, friends of hers, did the same; she then went into a place filled with flies—the wicked fairy lioness had a storehouse for them expressly to torment certain unfortunate beings. As soon as the flies smelt the sugar they settled upon it, and the friendly frogs returned at full gallop to the queen. There had never been such a take of flies, nor a better pasty than she made for the fairy lioness. When she presented it to her she was very much surprised, not at all understanding by what means she could have caught them.

The queen, who was exposed to all the influences of the air, which was poisonous, cut down some cypress-trees, to begin building her hut with. The frog generously came to offer her services, and putting herself at the head of all those who went fly-catching, they assisted the queen in erecting her little edifice, which was the prettiest in the world; but she had scarcely gone to bed in it when the monsters from the lake, envious of her repose, came to torment her by the most horrible clamour that had ever been heard. She arose quite terrified, and fled from the building, which was just what the monsters wanted. A dragon, in former days the tyrant of one of the finest kingdoms in the world, took immediate possession of it.

The poor afflicted queen complained of this outrage, but she was only laughed at.

The monsters hooted her, and the fairy lioness told her, that in future if she stunned her with her lamentations she would break every bone in her body. She was obliged to hold her tongue, and have recourse to the frog, who was certainly the best creature in the world. They wept together, for as soon as she possessed her hood of roses, she was able to laugh and cry like any one else. "I have," said she, "so much affection for you, that I will rebuild your habitation, let all the monsters of the lake be ever so furious about it." She began cutting the wood on the spot, and the queen's little rustic palace was built so quickly that she slept in it the same night.

The frog, attentive to all that was necessary for the queen, made her a bed of creeping-thyme and wild-thyme. When the wicked fairy found that the queen no longer slept upon the bare earth she sent for her. "Who are the men or the gods that protect you?" said she. "This land, on which no showers fall, save of sulphur and fire, has never produced as much as a leaf of sage, and I learn, notwithstanding, that odoriferous herbs grow in your path." "I am ignorant of the cause of it, madam," said the queen; "if I may attribute it to anything, it is to my infant, yet unborn, who will perhaps be less unfortunate than myself." "I have a fancy," said the fairy, "to have a bouquet of the rarest flowers; try if your little brat's good fortune will supply them for you; if it fail to do so stripes will not fail you; for I often administer them, and administer them wonderfully well." The queen began to weep; such threats were anything but agreeable to her; and the impossibility of finding any flowers threw her into despair.

She returned to her little dwelling; her friend the frog came to her. "How melancholy you seem!" said she to the queen. "Alas! my dear gossip, who could be otherwise? The fairy wants a nosegay of the finest flowers; where shall I find them? You see those which grow here, and yet my life is in danger if I do not satisfy her" "Amiable princess," said the frog graciously, "I must endeavour to get you out of this difficulty; there is a bat here, the only one I have had any dealings with; she is a good creature, she will go faster than I can. I will give her my hood of roses, and with this assistance she will find you some flowers." The queen made her a low courtesy, for there was no way of embracing the little frog.

The latter went immediately to speak to the bat, who in a few hours returned, hiding some beautiful flowers under her wings. The queen quickly carried them to the wicked fairy, who was more surprised than she had ever been, being unable to understand by what miracle the queen was so befriended.

The princess was incessantly looking for the means to escape. She acquainted the good frog with her wish, who said, "Madam, permit me first of all to consult my little hood, and we will act according to its advice. She took it, and having placed it on a rush, she burned some slips of juniper wood, some capers, and two little green peas; she then croaked five times, after which ceremony, putting the hood of roses on, she began to speak like an oracle.

"Destiny, ruler of everything," said she, "forbids you to quit these regions; you will

give birth here to a princess more beautiful than the mother of the loves; for the rest, do not trouble yourself. Time alone can relieve you."

The queen cast down her eyes, and tears fell from them, but she resolved to trust her friend. "At all events," said she, "do not desert me; be at my confinement, since it is decreed that it must take place here." The good frog promised to be her Lucina,[1] and consoled her as much as she could.

But it is time to return to the king. While his enemies were besieging him in his capital city, he could not regularly send couriers to the queen; having, however, made several sallies, he compelled them to raise the siege, and felt less happy at this success on his own account than on that of his dear queen, whom it would enable him to fetch home without fear. He was ignorant of her disaster; none of his officers ventured to inform him of it; they had found in the forest the remains of the chariot, the runaway horses, and all the amazonian ornaments she had put on in the idea of rejoining him.

As they had no doubt of her death, and believed her body to have been devoured by wild beasts, they agreed among themselves to persuade the king that she had died suddenly. At this sad news he thought he should die of grief himself—hair torn, tears shed, mournful exclamations, sobs, sighs, and other small duties of widowhood—nothing was wanting on this occasion.

After passing several days without seeing any one, or wishing to be seen, he returned to his capital city dressed in deep mourning, which he felt more at heart than his attire could testify. All the ambassadors of the neighbouring kings came to condole with him, and after the ceremonies which are inseparable from such occurrences, he applied himself to giving repose to his subjects, exempting them from war, and procuring for them an extensive commerce.

The queen was ignorant of all these matters; the time for her confinement arrived; she was safely put to bed, and Heaven blessed her with a little princess, as beautiful as the frog predicted. They named her Moufette, and the queen with much difficulty obtained permission from the fairy lioness to nurse it; for the ferocious and barbarous fairy had a great desire to eat it.

Moufette, the wonder of her age, was already six months old, and the queen, looking at her with affection mingled with pity, would incessantly say, "Ah! if the king, thy father, could see thee, my poor little baby, how delighted he would be! How dear thou wouldst be to him! But perhaps at this moment he is beginning to forget me: he thinks we are for ever buried in the horrors of death; perhaps at this moment another occupies that place in his heart which he once accorded to me."

These sad reflections cost her many tears. The frog, who truly loved her, seeing her weep, said to her one day, "If you wish it, madam, I will go and find the king, your husband; the journey is long, I travel slowly, but at last, a little sooner or later, I hope

[1] The goddess who presided over childbirth; said by some to be the daughter of Jupiter and Juno; by others Juno herself, or Diana.

to accomplish it." This proposal could not have been more agreeably received than it was by the queen, who clasped her hands, and even made Moufette join hers, to show madam frog how obliged she would be if she would undertake the journey. She assured her the king would not be ungrateful to her. "But," continued she, "of what utility will it be to him to know I am in this sad abode? it will be impossible for him to rescue me from it." "Madam," replied the frog, "we must leave that care to the gods, and attend to what depends upon ourselves."

They took leave of each other immediately; the queen wrote to the king with her own blood upon a small piece of linen, for she had neither ink nor paper. She begged him to trust the worthy frog in all respects, who would give him news of her.

The frog was a year and four days ascending the ten thousand steps from the black plain, where she had left the queen, up into the world, and she was another year preparing her equipage, for she was too proud to appear in a great court like a paltry little frog from the marshes. She ordered a litter to be made large enough to hold conveniently two eggs; it was entirely covered with tortoiseshell outside, and lined with the skin of young lizards. She had fifty maids of honour—they were some of those little green queens who leap about the meadows—each of them was mounted on a snail, with an English saddle, her leg placed on the bow with a wonderful air; several water-rats dressed as pages preceded the snails, to whom she had confided the care of her person; in short, nothing was ever so pretty; above all, her hood of marvellous roses, always fresh and blooming, became her better than anything. She was rather a coquette in her way, which induced her to use rouge and patches; they even said she painted,[1] as the greater number of the ladies did in that country, but the matter being looked into, it was found to be the mere scandal of her enemies.

She was seven years on her journey, during which time the poor queen suffered inexpressible pains and hardships, and without the beautiful Moufette to console her she would have died a hundred, and a hundred times over again. This wonderful little creature never opened her mouth nor spoke a word that she did not charm her mother; she even tamed the heart of the fairy lioness, and in short, after the queen had passed six years in this horrible abode, she allowed her to go hunting, on condition that all she killed should be for her.

How delighted was the poor queen, once more to behold the sun; she was so unaccustomed to it that she was fearful of becoming blind. As to Moufette, she was so skilful, though only five or six years old, that nothing escaped her that she shot at, and by this means the mother and daughter tamed down a little of the ferocity of the fairy lioness.

[1] That is, white as well as red, colouring the lips and marking the eyebrows. The wearing of rouge alone was not considered objectionable, as it became almost a necessity after the introduction of hair-powder.

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In passing near a wood there came out of it a horrible giant.

The little frog travelled day and night over hill and dale, and at last arrived in the vicinity of the capital city, where the king held his court; she was surprised at seeing everywhere nothing but dancing and feasting. People laughed and sang, and the nearer she approached the city, the greater appeared the joy and the merrymaking. Her marshy equipage surprised everybody—every one followed her, and the crowd became so great when she entered the city, that she had much difficulty in reaching the palace. There everything was magnificent. The king, who had been nine years a widower, had at last yielded to the prayers of his subjects, and he was on the point of marrying a princess certainly less beautiful than his wife, but who was nevertheless very charming. The good frog, having alighted from her car, entered the king's palace followed by her retinue. She had no occasion to demand an audience; the monarch, his betrothed, and all the princes were too anxious to learn the reason of her coming to interrupt her. "Sire," said she, "I know not whether the news I bring you will give you pain or pleasure; the wedding which is about to take place convinces me of your infidelity to the queen." "Her memory is always dear to me," said the king shedding tears from which he could not refrain; "but you must know, pretty frog, that kings cannot always do as they wish. It is now nine years that my subjects have been urging me to marry again. They require from me an heir to the throne. I have therefore chosen this young princess, who appears to me most charming." "I advise you not to marry her," said the frog, "for polygamy is a hanging matter. The queen is not dead; here is a letter written in her own blood which she has intrusted to me; you have a little princess called Moufette, who is more beautiful than all the goddesses combined."

The king took the little piece of linen on which the queen had scribbled a few words, kissed it, and bathed it with his tears; he showed it to all the assembly, saying he recollected perfectly her handwriting; he asked a thousand questions of the frog, to all of which she answered with as much sense as vivacity. The affianced princess, and the ambassadors who were appointed to witness the celebration of her marriage, made very wry faces. "How, sire," said the most eminent amongst them, "can you, upon the assertion of a little toad like this, break off so solemn a marriage? This scum of the marsh has the impertinence to come with a falsehood to your court, and enjoy the pleasure of being listened to!" "Mister ambassador," said the frog, "learn that I am not the scum of the marsh; and since I must here display my science, Come, fairies and vassals, appear!" All the little frogs, rats, snails, lizards, with herself at their head, appeared accordingly, but no longer in the form of such nasty little animals; their figures were lofty and majestic, their countenances pleasing, with eyes more brilliant than the stars; each of them wore a crown of jewels on its head, and upon the shoulders a royal mantle of velvet, lined with ermine, with a long train which was carried by a male or female dwarf. At the same time, behold, trumpets, kettledrums, hautboys and drums pierced the air with their lively and martial sounds; all the fairies and vassals began to dance a ballet, so lightly that the least jump carried them up to the ceiling. The

attentive king and the intended queen were not less astonished, when they saw all at once these honourable dancers metamorphosed into flowers—jasmine, jonquils, violets, pinks, and tuberoses. It was an animated parterre, the evolutions of which exhilarated the senses as much by their perfume as by their grace.

A moment afterwards the flowers vanished, and several fountains appeared in their places; they rose rapidly and fell into a large canal, which flowed at the foot of the castle. It was covered with little painted and gilded galleys, so pretty and gay, that the princess invited her ambassadors to go in with her to sail about. They did so willingly, considering it to be an entertainment that would be followed by a happy wedding.

As soon as they were embarked, the galley, the stream, and all the fountains disappeared, and the frogs became frogs again. The king inquired what had become of his princess. The frog replied, "Sire, you have no right to any one but the queen your wife; if I were not so great a friend of hers I should not give myself any trouble about your intended marriage, but she is so good, and your daughter Moufette is so lovely, that you ought not to lose a moment in trying to set them free." "I confess to you, madam frog," said the king, "that if I could believe my wife was not dead, there is nothing in the world I would not do to recover her." "After all the wonders I have performed in your presence," replied she, "it appears to me that you ought to be convinced of what I tell you. Leave your kingdom in good hands, and do not delay your departure. Here is a ring which will enable you to see the queen, and to speak to the fairy lioness, although she is the most terrible creature in the world."

The king, no longer caring for the princess who had been selected for him, felt that as his passion for her diminished, his former love for the queen became stronger than ever.

He set out, without permitting any one to accompany him, and made some very valuable presents to the frog. "Do not be discouraged," said she to him; "you will have some tremendous difficulties to surmount, but I hope you will succeed in accomplishing your object." The king, fortified by these promises, departed in search of his dear queen, with no other guide but his ring.

As Moufette became older, her beauty so greatly increased, that all the monsters of the quicksilver lake became in love with her. Dragons of the most hideous form were seen to come and crawl at her feet. Although she had beheld them from infancy, her beautiful eyes could not get accustomed to them; she would fly and hide herself in her mother's arms. "Shall we be a long time here?" she asked her. "Will our miseries never be ended?" The queen would give her hopes, to console her, but at heart she had none herself. The absence of the frog, her profound silence, so long a time having elapsed without any news of the king—all this, I say, afflicted her severely.

The fairy lioness by degrees accustomed herself to take the queen and princess out with her when she went hunting. She was fond of good eating; she liked the game they

killed for her, and though all she gave them in reward for their trouble was the feet or the head, still it was a great thing for them to be permitted again to behold the light of day. The fairy took the form of a lioness, the queen and her daughter rode upon her, and thus hunted through the forest.

The king, conducted by his ring, having stopped to rest in a forest, he saw them pass like an arrow from a bow. They did not see him. He endeavoured to follow them, but lost sight of them completely.

Notwithstanding the queen's incessant troubles, her beauty was not at all diminished. She appeared more lovely than ever. All his affection for her was rekindled; and feeling sure the young princess who was with her was his dear Moufette, he determined to perish a thousand times sooner than abandon his attempt to recover them.

The kind ring conducted him to the dark abode in which the queen had resided for so many years. He was not a little surprised at descending to the centre of the earth, but what he saw there astonished him still more. The fairy lioness, who knew everything, was aware of the day and the hour that he would arrive. What would she not have given if fate, in league with her, would have ordered it otherwise? But she resolved at least to resist the power of the king with all her might.

In the middle of the quicksilver lake she built a crystal palace, which floated on the waves. She shut up the poor queen and her daughter in it; and then she harangued all the monsters who were in love with Moufette. "You will lose this beautiful princess," said she to them, "if you do not assist me in defending her against a knight who comes to carry her off." The monsters promised to leave nothing undone that they could do: they surrounded the crystal palace; the lightest of them placed themselves upon the roof and on the walls, others at the doors, and the rest in the lake.

The king, guided by his faithful ring, went first to the mouth of the fairy's cavern. She waited for him under her form of a lioness. The moment he appeared, she flew upon him. He drew his sword with a courage she was not prepared for; and as she thrust out her paw to drag him to the ground, he lopped it off at the joint, which was

exactly that of her elbow. She uttered a loud cry, and fell. He approached her, and put his foot upon her throat: he swore by his faith he would kill her; and notwithstanding her unconquerable fury she could not help being afraid of him. "What wouldest thou?" said she to him; "what dost thou ask of me?" "I would punish thee," replied he fiercely, "for carrying away my wife; and I will compel thee to restore her to me, or I will strangle thee directly." "Cast thine eyes upon that lake," said she; "see if she be in my power." The king looked in the direction she pointed. He perceived the queen and her daughter in the crystal castle, which though it had neither oars nor rudder, glided like a galley over the quicksilver lake. He felt ready to die of mingled joy and grief; he called to them as loudly as he could, and they heard him, but how could he reach them? While he was endeavouring to find out some way, the fairy lioness disappeared. He ran along the edge of the lake; but when he had nearly reached the transparent palace on one side, it receded from him with an astonishing swiftness to the other, and his expectations were thus continually frustrated. The queen, fearing that he would at last become weary of this work, cried out to him not to lose courage; for the fairy's object was to tire him, but that true love was not to be rebutted by any difficulties; and with that she and Moufette stretched out their hands to him, and made all manner of supplicating actions. At this sight the king was more than ever affected. He raised his voice, and swore by the rivers Styx and Acheron to remain for the rest of his life in those miserable regions, rather than return without them.

He must have been endowed with wonderful perseverance. He passed his time as sadly as any king in the world. The ground, full of brambles and covered with thorns, was his bed; he had nothing to eat but the wild fruits, bitterer than gall; and he had continually to defend himself against assaults from the monsters of the lake. A husband who could go through all this in order to recover his wife must certainly have lived in the time of fairies; and his proceedings sufficiently mark the epoch of my story.[1]

Three years passed without the king's perceiving any hope of success. He was nearly mad. A hundred times he was on the point of throwing himself into the lake; and he would have done so if he could have imagined this last step would have released the queen and princess from their sorrows. He was running one day as usual, first on one side of the lake and then on the other, when a horrible dragon called to him, and said, "If you will swear to me by your crown and by your sceptre, by your royal mantle, by your wife and your daughter, to give me a certain tit-bit to eat, which I am very fond of, and will ask you for when I want it, I will take you on my wings, and in spite of all the monsters who cover the lake, and who guard this crystal castle, I promise you that we will carry away the queen and Princess Moufette."

"Ah, thou dear dragon of my soul!" cried the king, "I swear to you and to all your dragon-kind, that I will feed you to your heart's content, and still remain your

[1] This pleasantry is repeated in the verses that terminate the tale.

humble servant." "Do not pledge your word," replied the dragon, "if you do not intend to keep it; for such terrible evils will befall you, that you will rue it for the rest of your life." The king redoubled his protestations: he was dying with impatience to release his dear queen; he mounted on the dragon's back as he would have done upon the finest horse in the world. At the same time the monsters advanced to intercept him. They fought. Nothing could be heard but the sharp hissing of serpents; nothing could be seen but fire. Sulphur and saltpetre came down pell-mell! At length the king reached the castle. The monsters redoubled their efforts—bats, owls, ravens, all attempted to prevent his entrance; but the dragon with his claws, his teeth, and his tail, tore in pieces the boldest of them. The queen, on her part, who witnessed this great battle, broke her prison walls by kicking at them, and armed herself with the pieces, to assist her dear husband. They were at last victorious. The king and queen reached each other; and the enchantment was ended by a thunderbolt, which fell into the lake, and dried it up.

The kind dragon had disappeared with all the others; and without the king being able to guess by what means he had been transported into his capital city, he found himself there, with the queen and Moufette, seated in a magnificent hall, with a banquet table before them, covered with delicious dishes. Never was there astonishment equal to theirs, nor greater rejoicings. All their subjects ran to gaze on their queen and the young princess, who, by a succession of miracles, were so superbly dressed, that the crowd was completely dazzled by the brilliancy of their jewels.

It is easy to imagine that this fine court was speedily occupied with every sort of pleasure. They had masquerades, runnings at the ring, and tournaments, which attracted thither the greatest princes in the world; and Moufette's lovely eyes riveted them all to the spot. Amongst the handsomest and most skilful, Prince Moufy was particularly distinguished. Nothing was heard but his praises: everybody admired him, and the young Moufette, who had passed all her previous days amongst the serpents and dragons of the lake, did not hesitate to render justice to Moufy's merit. Not a day passed that he did not invent some new piece of gallantry to please her; for he loved her passionately; and having entered the lists to establish his pretensions, he made known to the king and to the queen that his principality was so beautiful and so extensive that it deserved their particular attention.

The king told him that Moufette was at liberty to choose her own husband, and that he would not constrain her inclination in anything; that the prince should do his best to please her; and that such was his only way to happiness. The prince was delighted with this answer. He had gathered from her, during several interviews, that she was not indifferent to him; and after having at last come to an explanation with her, she told him, if he were not to be her husband, she would never have any other. Moufy, transported with joy, threw himself at her feet, and conjured her in the most affectionate terms to remember the promise she had just given him.

He ran instantly to the king and queen's apartment, and related to them the progress he had made in his suit with Moufette, and intreated them not to defer his happiness They consented to it with pleasure. Prince Moufy was gifted with so many excellent qualities, that he alone seemed worthy to possess the admirable Moufette. The king wished very much to affiance them before he returned to Moufy, whither he was obliged to go, to give orders for his marriage, but he would rather never have left, than depart without full assurance of happiness on his return. The Princess Moufette did not say farewell without shedding many tears. She had I know not what sort of a presentiment that afflicted her; and the queen, perceiving the prince overwhelmed with grief, gave him her daughter's portrait, begging him, for the love of them both, that he would forego some of the magnificence of his solemn entry, rather than allow it to prevent his speedy return. He said, "Madam, I have never had so much pleasure in obeying you as I shall have on this occasion; my heart is too much interested in it for me to neglect anything so necessary to my happiness."

He posted off; and the Princess Moufette, while waiting his return, occupied herself with singing and playing on various instruments she had been learning for several months past, and upon which she performed admirably. One day when she was in the queen's room the king entered, with his cheeks bathed in tears, and embracing his daughter, exclaimed, "Oh, my child! oh, unfortunate father! oh, unhappy king!" He could say no more, sighs choked his utterance. The queen and the princess, much terrified, inquired what was the matter. He at length told them that a giant of an enormous size had just arrived, who said he was an ambassador from the dragon of the lake, who, in discharge of the promise that he had exacted from the king as the condition on which he would assist him to fight and conquer the monsters, had sent to demand the Princess Moufette, that he might eat her in a pie; that the king had bound himself by the most awful oaths to give the dragon whatever he desired: and in those days kings knew not how to break their words.

The queen, hearing these sad tidings, uttered piercing cries, and strained the princess in her arms. "They shall take my life sooner," said she, "than make me give up my daughter to this monster; let him take our kingdom, and all that we possess! Unnatural father, could you be a party to such a barbarous act? What! Put my child into a pie? Ah, I cannot bear the thought of it! Send this cruel ambassador to me, perhaps my affliction may move him to pity."

The king did not reply; he went to the giant, and brought him immediately to the queen, who threw herself at his feet, and with her daughter intreated him to have pity upon them, and to persuade the dragon to take all that they had, and to save Moufette's life; but he told them it did not depend upon him at all; that the dragon was too obstinate, and too fond of good living; that when he took it into his head to eat some little tit-bit, all the gods put together could not change his fancy: that he advised them as a friend to submit with a good grace, or still greater misfortunes might befall them.

At these words the queen fainted, and so would the princess have done had she not been obliged to assist her mother.

This sad news was scarcely spread through the palace, before everybody in the city knew it, and nothing was to be heard but sighs and lamentations; for Moufette was adored. The king could not make up his mind to give her to the giant, and the giant, who had already waited several days, began to be tired, and threatened him in a terrible manner. In the meantime, the king and the queen said, "Could anything have happened to us worse than this? If the dragon of the lake came to eat all of us up, we could not be more distressed; if they put our Moufette into a pie, we are lost." Upon which the giant told them, he had received news from his master, and that if the princess would marry a nephew of his, he consented to let her live; that as to the rest, this nephew was handsome and well made; that he was a prince, and that she might live very happily with him.

This proposal slightly ameliorated their majesties' grief; the queen spoke to the princess, but she found her more averse to this marriage than to her death. "I will not be guilty, madam," said she, "of preserving my life by an act of infidelity; you have promised me to Prince Moufy, I will never be another's; let me die, the sacrifice of my life will insure the peace of yours." The king followed the queen; he spoke to his daughter upon the subject with the greatest affection imaginable; she remained firm in her decision, and finally he agreed to conduct her to the top of a mountain, whither the dragon of the lake was to come for her.

Everything was prepared for this sad sacrifice; not even those of Iphigenia and Psyche were so mournful; nothing but black dresses, pale faces, and consternation was to be seen. Four hundred young girls of the first distinction, dressed in long white robes, and cypress wreaths on their heads, accompanied her. They carried her in a black velvet litter, uncovered, in order that every one might see the masterpiece of the gods; her dishevelled locks lay scattered upon her shoulders, here and there tied with crape, and the wreath she wore upon her head was of jasmine mixed with marigolds.[1] She seemed to be affected only by the grief of the king and queen, who followed her, overwhelmed by their deep affliction. The giant, armed from top to toe, walked by the side of the litter containing the princess, and looking at her with a longing eye, seemed as if he was sure of having his share of her to eat; the air was filled with sighs and sobs, and the road was inundated by the tears that were shed.

"Ah, frog! frog!" cried the queen, "you have quite forsaken me. Alas! why did you give me your assistance in that gloomy plain, since you now refuse it to me? How happy I should be had I then died! I should not to-day see all my hopes destroyed; I should not see my dear Moufette on the point of being devoured!"

While she was uttering these complaints they were still advancing, however slowly

[1] Soucis, which also signifies cares. See note, page 295.

they walked, and at last they reached the summit of the fatal mountain. At this spot the shrieks and lamentations were redoubled so violently, that nothing had ever been heard so distressing. The giant bade them all to take their leave and retire. They did so accordingly; for in those times people were very simple, and never sought a remedy for anything.

The king and queen having retired, ascended another mountain with all their court, whence they could see what was about to happen to the princess, and in fact they had not been there a long time before they perceived in the air a dragon, with a tail nearly half a league in length; he had also six wings. He could scarcely fly, his body was so heavy, entirely covered with large blue scales and long fiery darts; his tail was in fifty curls and a half, each of his claws were as large as a windmill, and his wide-open mouth displayed three rows of teeth, as long as the tusks of an elephant.

But while he was slowly approaching, the dear and faithful frog, mounted on a sparrow hawk, flew rapidly to the Prince Moufy. She wore her hood of roses, and although he was locked up in his closet, she entered it without a key. "What are you doing here, unfortunate lover?" said she to him; "you are dreaming of Moufette's charms, who is at this moment exposed to a most frightful catastrophe. Here is a rose leaf; by blowing upon it I can transform it into a beautiful horse, as you will see." At the same instant appeared a horse, entirely green. It had twelve feet and three heads. The mouth of one head emitted fire, that of another bomb-shells, and the third, cannon balls. She gave him a sword that was eighteen yards long, and lighter than a feather; she armed him in one single diamond, which he got into as if it were his coat, and although it was as hard as a rock, it was so flexible, that it did not incommode him in the least. "Away!" said she to him, "run, fly to defend her whom you love; the green horse which I give you will carry you to her; when you have rescued her, let her know what share I have had in her deliverance."

"Generous fairy," cried the prince, "I cannot at present express all my gratitude to

you, but I declare myself for ever your most faithful slave." He mounted his three-headed horse, which immediately set off full gallop with its twelve feet, and made more haste than three of the finest horses; so much so, that in a very short time he arrived at the top of the mountain, where he saw his dear princess all alone, and the frightful dragon slowly approaching towards her. The green horse belched fire, bombs, and cannon balls, which not a little astonished the monster; he received twenty cannon balls in his throat, which damaged his scales a little, and the bombs knocked out one eye. He became furious, and would have rushed upon the prince; but his sword, eighteen yards long, was of such fine tempered steel, that he wielded it as he pleased, thrusting it sometimes up to the hilt, or lashing him with it as with a whip. The prince would not, however, have escaped feeling the force of this monster's claws, but for the diamond armour, which was impenetrable.

Moufette recognised him from afar, for the diamond which completely encased him was exceedingly brilliant and clear; she was consequently seized with the most mortal fright that a fond woman could suffer under such circumstances; but the king and queen began to feel in their heart some ray of hope; for it was very extraordinary to see a horse with twelve feet and three heads, out of which came fire and flames, and a prince in a case of diamonds, and armed with so formidable a sword, arrive at so critical a moment and fight with so much valour. The king placed his hat upon his cane, and the queen tied her handkerchief to the end of a stick, to make signs to the prince and encourage him. All their retinue did the same; but he did not require it, for his heart alone, and the peril in which he saw his mistress, was sufficient to animate him.

What efforts did he not make! The earth was covered with darts, claws, horns, wings, and scales of the dragon. The monster's blood flowed in a thousand places, which was quite blue, while that of the horse was green, which made a singular mixture upon the ground. The prince fell five times, but always recovered himself; he seized his opportunity to remount his horse, and then followed such showers of cannon balls and floods of Greek fire,[1] that never was anything like it before. At last the dragon lost his strength; he fell, and the prince gave him a thrust in the belly which caused a frightful gash; but what one would have some difficulty in believing, and yet is quite as true as the rest of the story, is, that from this large wound issued the handsomest and most charming prince that had ever been seen. His dress was of blue cut velvet, with a gold ground, embroidered with pearls; he had on his head a little Greek morion, covered with white feathers. He ran with open arms to embrace Prince Moufy: "How much I am indebted to you, my generous benefactor!" said he; "you have just delivered me from the most frightful prison that a sovereign could have been shut up in. I was condemned to it by the fairy lioness. Sixteen years have I been pining therein, and her power was such, that against my inclination she would have compelled me to devour

[1] A combustible used in ancient warfare, which could not be extinguished by water.

this beautiful princess; lead me to her feet, that I may explain my misfortunes to her."

Prince Moufy, surprised and delighted by so astonishing an adventure, paid the prince the greatest attention. They hastened to join the lovely Moufette, who, on her part, returned the gods a thousand thanks for so unexpected a happiness. The king and queen and all the court were already with her; every one spoke at once, no one was heard, they cried nearly as much for joy as they had done for sorrow. In short, that nothing should be missing at the fête, the good frog appeared in the air, mounted on a sparrow-hawk, which had golden bells at its feet. When they heard the tinkle, tinkle, they all looked up; they saw the hood of roses, shining like the sun, and the frog as beautiful as Aurora. The queen advanced towards her, and took one of her little paws; instantly the wise frog transformed herself, and appeared as a noble queen, with the most agreeable countenance in the world. "I come," said she, "to crown Princess Moufette's constancy. She preferred sacrificing her life to being unfaithful; this is a rare example in the age in which we live, but it will be much more so in future times." She then took two myrtle wreaths, which she placed upon the head of the happy lovers, and striking with her wand three times, they saw all the dragon's bones rise to make a triumphal arch, in commemoration of the great event that had just taken place. At length this beautiful and numerous company advanced towards the city, singing nuptial hymns as joyfully as they had chanted mournful dirges when proceeding to the sacrifice of the princess. Their marriage was only deferred till the next day. It is easy to imagine the happiness that accompanied it.

"The queen, whose portrait I have painted here,
Amid the horrors of that gloomy lake,
Had for her life but little cause to fear;
Friendship with love united for her sake.

"The grateful frog felt, like the monarch, bound
To make the greatest efforts in her cause,
Despite the cruel lioness, they found
The means to snatch her from her fatal claws.

"Husbands so constant, friends so brave and true,
Ages ago were of our sires the glory;
And by that little fact, kind reader, you
May guess, perhaps, the period of my story."

# THE HIND IN THE WOOD

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who were perfectly happy together; they loved each other most affectionately, and their subjects adored them; but the regret was universal, that there was not an heir to the crown. The queen, who felt persuaded that the king would love her still more if she brought him one, went in the spring to drink the waters at some baths that were in high estimation. People flocked to them in crowds, and the number of strangers was so great, that persons from all parts of the world were to be found there.

There were several fountains, in a large wood, that the visitors went to drink from; they were surrounded by marble and porphyry; for every one was anxious to ornament them. One day when the queen was sitting at the edge of one of the fountains, she desired all her ladies to retire and leave her by herself. She then began to complain as usual. "Am I not very unfortunate," said she, "to have no offspring? The poorest women have some children; it is now five years since I have prayed for one, and I have not yet obtained my wish! Shall I die without this gratification?"

As she thus spoke, she remarked that the water in the fountain was agitated. Presently a large crab appeared, and said, "Great queen, you shall have your wish. I must inform you, that hard by there is a superb palace, which the fairies have built; but it is impossible for you to find it, because it is surrounded by thick clouds, that no mortal eye could penetrate; however, I am your very humble servant; if you will trust yourself to the conduct of a poor crab, I offer to lead you there."

The queen listened without interrupting her, the novelty of hearing a crab talk being so surprising. She told her that she would accept her offer with pleasure; but that she could not walk backwards as she did. The crab smiled, and immediately took the figure of a handsome little old woman.

"Very well, madam," said she, "we will not walk backwards, I consent to that: but, at all events, look upon me as one of your friends who would be of service to you."

She walked out of the fountain without being wetted. Her dress was white, lined with crimson, and her grey hair was dressed with knots of green ribbon; scarcely was ever seen an old woman with so sprightly an air. She saluted the queen, and was embraced by her; and, without delaying any longer, she conducted her through a path

in the wood, which astonished that princess; for, although she had been in the wood a thousand and a thousand times, she had never entered that particular path. How could she have entered it? It was the road by which the fairies went to the fountain, and was generally closed by brambles and thorns; but when the queen and her conductress presented themselves, roses immediately appeared upon the brambles, jasmine and orange-trees interlaced their branches, to form an arbour covered by leaves and flowers. The ground was mantled with violets; a thousand different birds sang in emulation of each other upon the trees.

The queen had not recovered from her astonishment, when her eyes were struck by the unequalled lustre of a palace of diamonds—the walls, the roofs, the platforms, the floors, the stairs, the balconies, even the terraces, were all diamonds. In the excitement of her admiration, she could not help uttering a loud cry; and asked the fine old lady who accompanied her, if what she saw was a dream, or reality? "Nothing can be more real, madam," replied she. Immediately the gates of the palace opened, six fairies issued forth—but what fairies! The most beautiful and the most magnificent that had ever been seen in their empire. They all came and made a profound courtesy to the queen, and each presented her with a flower of precious stones, to make her a bouquet. There was a rose, a tulip, an anemone, a columbine, a carnation, and a pomegranate. "Madam," said they, "we cannot give you a greater mark of our esteem than that of permitting you to come here to see us; but we are delighted to announce to you, that you will have a beautiful princess, whom you will call Désirée; for it must be admitted it is a long time that you have desired her. Do not fail to send for us the moment she is born, for we wish to endow her with all kinds of good qualities; you have only to hold the bouquet that we have given you, and name each flower, thinking of us, and be sure that we shall be instantly in your chamber."

The queen, transported with joy, threw her arms round their necks, and embraced them for more than half an hour. After which they begged the queen to enter their palace, the beauty of which it is not possible sufficiently to describe. They had chosen for the builder of it the architect of the sun; he had executed in miniature all that which is on a grand scale in that luminary. The queen, who could not support the brilliancy without pain, shut her eyes at every instant. They conducted her to their garden; there had never been such fine fruit: the apricots were bigger than your head, and they could not, without cutting it in quarters, eat a cherry of such exquisite flavour, that after the queen had tasted it, she never wished to eat anything else. There was also an orchard of artificial trees, which notwithstanding had life, and grew like the others.

To relate all the queen's delight, how she talked of the little Princess Désirée, how she thanked the kind persons who announced such agreeable news to her, is more than I can undertake to do; but, in short, there were no terms of affection and gratitude forgotten. The fairy of the fountain received the full share she deserved of them. The queen remained in the palace till night; she loved music, they entertained her with

voices that seemed celestial, they loaded her with presents, and, after thanking these excellent ladies very much, she returned with the fairy of the fountain.

All her household were in great distress about her; they sought for her, with much anxiety; they could not imagine where she could be; they even feared some audacious stranger had carried her off, for she was young and beautiful; so that every one was extremely rejoiced at her return: and as she felt on her part an infinite satisfaction at the good news that had just been announced to her, her agreeable and sparkling conversation charmed everybody.

The fairy of the fountain parted with her close by her own home; compliments and caresses were redoubled at their separation, and the queen remaining eight days longer at the baths, did not fail to revisit the palace of the fairies with her coquettish old lady, who always appeared first as a crab and then took her natural form.

The queen returned to court, and was in due time confined of a princess, to whom she gave the name of Désirée; she immediately took the bouquet she had received, and named all the flowers, one after the other, and forthwith all the fairies arrived. Each of them had a different sort of chariot; one was of ebony drawn by white pigeons, others were of ivory drawn by young ravens, others of cedar and eagle-wood.[1] This was their equipage of alliance and peace; for, when they were angry, they had nothing but flying-dragons, adders which darted fire from their mouths and eyes, lions, leopards, and panthers, upon which they transported themselves from one end of the world to another, in a shorter time than one could say "Good day," or "Good night;" but at this moment they were in the best possible humour.

The queen saw them enter her chamber with a lively and majestic air; their dwarfs followed them, loaded with presents. After they had embraced the queen, and kissed the little princess, they displayed the baby's clothes; the linen of which was so fine and so good, that it might be used for a hundred years without wearing it out—the fairies had spun it themselves in their leisure hours. As to the lace, it surpassed even what I have said of the linen; all the history of the world was represented either in point or in bone-lace.

After that, they showed her the blankets and coverlids which they had embroidered expressly for the princess with representations of a thousand different games that children play at. Since the existence of embroiderers and embroideresses nothing so wonderful was ever seen; but, when the cradle appeared, the queen positively screamed with admiration; for it surpassed everything they had shown her before: it was made of a wood so rare that it cost a hundred thousand crowns a pound; four little cupids supported it; they were four masterpieces wherein art had so far surpassed the material, although it was of diamonds and rubies, that no one could say enough about them. These little cupids had been animated by the fairies, so that when the child cried they rocked it, and made it sleep; a wonderful convenience for the nurses.

[1] Vide note, page 142.

The fairies themselves took the little princess upon their knees, they swathed her, and gave her more than a hundred kisses; for she was already so beautiful that no one could look at her without loving her. They said that she was hungry, and instantly they struck the ground with their wands; a nurse appeared—such a one as befitted this lovely babe. It now only remained to endow the infant, and the fairies hastened to do so. One endowed her with virtue, another with wit, a third with wonderful beauty, the next with good fortune, the fifth with continual health, and the last with the gift of doing everything well which she undertook.

The queen, enchanted, thanked them a thousand and a thousand times for the favours they had just conferred upon the little princess; when they perceived, entering the chamber, so large a crab, that the door was scarcely wide enough for her to pass through. "Ah! too ungrateful queen," said the crab, "you have not then deigned to remember me! Is it possible you have so soon forgotten the fairy of the fountain, and the services she rendered you, by introducing you to her sisters? What! you have summoned them all—I alone am neglected! Certainly I had a presentiment of it, and it was that which obliged me to take the form of a crab when I first spoke to you, to signify thereby that your friendship, instead of progressing, would retrograde."

The queen, inconsolable at seeing the fault she had committed, interrupted her, and asked her pardon. She told her she thought she had named her flower with the others; that it was the bouquet of precious stones that had deceived her; that she had not been guilty of forgetting the obligations she was under to her; that she supplicated her not to deprive her of her friendship, and particularly to befriend the princess. The fairies, who feared she would but endow the child with misery and misfortune, seconded the queen's endeavours, to appease her. "My dear sister," said they, "let not your highness be angry with a queen who never had an idea of displeasing you. For mercy's sake quit this form of a crab, and let us behold you with all your charms."

I have already said that the fairy of the fountain was rather a coquette; the praises of her sisters softened her a little. "Very well," said she; "I will not do all the mischief to Désirée I had intended; for assuredly I had a mind to destroy her, and nothing could have prevented my doing so. However, I give you warning, that if she sees the light of day before she is fifteen years old, it will perhaps cost her her life." The queen's tears, and the prayers of the illustrious fairies, could not alter the decree she had just pronounced. She retired walking backwards, for she had not chosen to put off her crab's dress.

As soon as she had quitted the chamber, the sorrowful queen asked the fairies to point out some way of preserving her daughter from the evils that threatened her. They immediately consulted together; and at last, after discussing several different opinions, they decided upon this one: which was to build a palace without either doors or windows, to make a subterraneous entry to it, and to educate the princess in this place, till the fatal period during which she was threatened with misfortune should have

expired. Three taps of a wand began and finished this grand edifice. The exterior was of white and green marble; the ceilings and the floors were of diamonds and emeralds, placed in the form of flowers, birds, and a thousand agreeable objects. All the furniture and hangings were of different coloured velvets, embroidered by the hands of the fairies; and, as they were learned in history, it had been a pleasure to them to work representations of the greatest and most remarkable adventures; the future was depicted as well as the past. The heroic actions of the greatest king in the world[1] filled many of the pieces.

"Here of the Thracian god he bore the mien;
Fierce lightnings flashing from his eyes were seen:
There over France he ruled in peace profound;
Her lot the envy of the world around.
The arts he fosters, grateful for his care,
His form august had pictured everywhere:
To fierce assaults victorious legions leading,
Or, generously, peace to vanquished foes conceding."

These wise fairies had hit upon this mode of making the young princess more easily acquainted with the different events in the lives of heroes and other celebrated men.

In her palace there was no light to see by but that of wax candles; but of these there were so great a number that they made it one perpetual day. All the masters whom the princess required to perfect her education were conducted to this place. Her intelligence, her quickness, and her skill enabled her generally to comprehend beforehand what they intended teaching her; and they were all of them in one continual admiration of the surprising things she said, at an age when others were hardly able to pronounce the name of their nurse; but certainly one who is endowed by fairies is not expected to be stupid and ignorant.

If her wit charmed all who approached her, the effects from her beauty were not less powerful. She enraptured the most insensible people; and the queen her mother would never have lost sight of her, if her duty had not obliged her to be near the king. The good fairies every now and then went to see the princess; they took her matchless rarities—dresses so cleverly invented, so costly, and so elegant, that they seemed to have been made for the nuptials of a young princess[2] not less amiable than she of whom I speak. But of all the fairies who protected her, Tulip loved her the most, and most carefully impressed upon the queen the necessity of not allowing her to see daylight before she was fifteen years old. "Our sister of the fountain is vindictive," said she; "whatever care we may take of this child, she will do it some mischief if she can. Therefore, madam, you cannot be too vigilant in that matter." The queen promised to be incessantly watchful upon such an important affair; but as the time drew near for her dear daughter to leave the palace, she made her sit for her picture, and her portrait

[1] Louis XIV.

[2] This allusion is probably explained by the note to p. 322.

was taken to the greatest courts of the universe. There was not a prince who could avoid being struck with admiration at the sight of it; but there was one who was so moved by it that he could never leave it. He placed it in his closet, shut himself up with it, and talked to it, as though it were sensible and could understand him; he said the most passionate things in the world to it.

The king, who now hardly ever saw his son, inquired how he was occupied, and what it could be that prevented his appearing as cheerful as usual. Some of the courtiers, too eager to speak—for there are many of that sort—told him they feared that the prince would go out of his mind; for he remained whole days together shut up alone in his closet, where they could hear him talking, as though he had some lady with him.

The king received this information with much uneasiness. "Is it possible," said he to his confidants, "that my son has lost his reason? He has always evinced so much. You know how greatly he has been admired up to this moment; and I do not see anything wild in his looks. He appears to me to be only a little melancholy: I must talk to him; I may, perhaps, be able to discover what sort of madness has seized him."

Consequently he sent for him, ordered every one else to withdraw, and, after several things to which the prince paid little attention, and to which he answered very indifferently, the king asked him what was the cause of the alteration in his manner and person. The prince, believing this to be a favourable opportunity, threw himself at his father's feet, and said: "You have resolved that I shall wed the black princess; you will find some great advantages in this alliance that I could not promise from that with the Princess Désirée; but, sire, I discover charms in the latter that I shall not meet with in the former." "And where have you discovered them?" said the king. "The portraits of the one and the other have been brought to me," replied Prince Guerrier (for thus he was named after having won three great battles), "I confess that I am desperately in love with the Princess Désirée, and, if you do not retract the promise you

have given to the black princess, I shall die—happy in ceasing to live, losing the hope of being hers I love."

"It is with her portrait, then," gravely answered the king, "that you have chosen to hold conversations which have rendered you ridiculous in the eyes of all the courtiers? They believe you to be mad; and if you knew what has been said to me on the subject, you would be ashamed of showing so much weakness." "I cannot reproach myself for entertaining so worthy a passion," answered the prince. "When you have seen the portrait of this charming princess, you will approve of my affection for her." "Go for it, then, directly:" said the king, with an impatient air, which evidently indicated his vexation. The prince would have been much distressed at it, if he had not felt certain that nothing could be equal to Désirée's beauty. He ran into his closet for the portrait, and returned with it to the king, who was nearly as much enchanted as his son. "Ah, ah! my dear Guerrier," said he, "I consent to your wish. I shall become young again, when I shall have so lovely a princess in my court. I shall immediately despatch ambassadors to the court of the black princess, to retract my word; though it should occasion a sharp war with her, I prefer that alternative."

The prince respectfully kissed his father's hand, and more than once fell at his feet; he was so delighted, they hardly knew him again. He begged the king to hasten the departure of his ambassadors, not only to the black princess, but to Princess Désirée; and desired that he would choose for the latter mission the most able and wealthy person, as it was necessary that he should appear in great state upon so celebrated an occasion, and possess the power of persuasion in the highest degree. The king fixed upon Becafigue, a very eloquent young nobleman with a hundred millions a year. He was exceedingly fond of Prince Guerrier, and, to gratify him, ordered the most magnificent equipage and the richest liveries that could be imagined. His preparations were made with all speed, for the prince's love increased every day, and incessantly he was imploring the ambassador to set out. "Remember," said he in confidence to him, "that my life depends upon it; that I am perfectly distracted when I think the father of my princess may enter into engagements with some one else that he would not be inclined to break off in my favour, and that I may lose her for ever!" Becafigue endeavoured to encourage him, that he might gain time; for he was exceedingly anxious his appearance should do him honour. He took with him four-and-twenty coaches all blazing with gold and diamonds; the highest finished miniature could not compare to the paintings with which they were ornamented. There were also fifty other coaches; twenty-four thousand pages on horseback, dressed finer than princes; and the rest of this grand procession was of equal magnificence.

When the ambassador took his leave of the prince, he warmly embraced him. "Remember, my dear Becafigue," said he, "my life depends upon the marriage you are going to negotiate for me. Omit no means of persuading and bringing back with you the lovely princess whom I adore." He loaded him also with a thousand presents for

the princess, the gallantry of which equalled their magnificence. There were quantities of amorous devices engraven upon diamond seals; watches contained in carbuncles with Désirée's cypher upon them; bracelets of rubies cut in the shape of hearts: in short, what had he not thought of to please her!

The ambassador took the portrait of this young prince, which had been painted by so skilful an artist, that it spoke, and paid the most charming little compliments. It did not absolutely reply to all that was said to it, but it very nearly did so. Becafigue promised the prince he would neglect nothing that could give him satisfaction; and he added, that he had taken so much money with him that, if they refused him the princess, he would find the means of bribing one of her women and carry her off. "Ah!" cried the prince, "I cannot agree to that; she would be offended by so disrespectful a proceeding." Becafigue made no answer to that remark, and took his departure. The rumour of his voyage preceded his arrival. The king and queen were enchanted; they highly esteemed his master, and had heard of Prince Guerrier's great achievements, but what they were much better acquainted with were his personal merits, so that, had they sought all over the world for a husband for their daughter, they would not have found one more worthy of her. They prepared a palace for Becafigue, and they gave all the necessary orders for the court to appear in the greatest splendour.

The king and queen resolved that the ambassador should see Désirée, but the fairy Tulip came to the queen and said, "Take care, madam, that you do not introduce Becafigue to our child"—it was thus she called the princess—"he must not see her yet; and do not consent to let her go to the king, who demands her hand for his son, until she is fifteen years old; for I am convinced, if she quit her palace before then, some misfortune will befall her." The queen embraced the good Tulip, promising to follow her advice, and they went immediately to see the princess.

The ambassador arrived; his procession was twenty-three hours in passing, for he had six hundred thousand great mules, the bells and shoes of which were of gold, their housings of velvet and brocade embroidered with pearls. The confusion it caused in the streets was unequalled; every one was running to look at it. The king and queen went to meet him, so delighted were they at his coming. It is useless to talk of the speeches that were made, and of the ceremonies which passed on one side and the other. They can be imagined well enough; but when he asked to be allowed to make his bow to the princess, he was very much surprised to find that favour was denied him. "It is no caprice of our own, my Lord Becafigue," said the king, "that induces us to refuse a request which you are perfectly justified in making; but, in order that you should understand our reasons, I must relate to you our daughter's extraordinary adventure:—

"A fairy took an aversion to her from the moment of her birth, and threatened her with some very great misfortune if she saw the light of day before the age of fifteen; we keep her in a palace the most beautiful apartments of which are underground. We had determined to take you there, when the fairy, Tulip, forbade our doing so." "Ah,

sire," replied the ambassador, "shall I have the misery of returning without her highness? You have given her to the king, my master, for his son; she is waited for with the greatest impatience; is it possible that you hesitate on such trifling grounds as the predictions of fairies? Here is Prince Guerrier's portrait that I was desired to present her with—it is so like him, that I think I see him before me when I look at it."

He immediately produced it. The portrait, which had only been taught to speak to the princess, said, "Beautiful Désirée, you cannot imagine how ardently I await you; come quickly to our court, and ornament it by those graces which render you incomparable." The portrait ceased speaking. The king and queen were so perfectly astonished, that they intreated Becafigue to give it them; he was delighted to do so, and placed it in their hands.

The queen had not yet spoken to her daughter of what was passing; she had even forbidden the ladies who were near her to say anything of the ambassador's arrival. They had not, however, obeyed her, and the princess knew a great marriage was in agitation for her, but she was so prudent that she took no notice of it to her mother. When she showed her the prince's portrait, which spoke and paid her a compliment as affectionate as it was polite, she was indeed surprised, for she had never seen anything to equal that, and the fine appearance of the prince, the intellectual expression and regularity of his features, astonished her no less than the words of the portrait.

"Should you be sorry," said the queen laughingly, "to have a husband who resembled this prince?" "Madam," replied she, "it is not for me to choose, therefore I shall be content with whomsoever you please to appoint for me." "But in a word," added the queen, "if the chance fell upon him, would you not esteem yourself very happy?" She blushed, looked down, and said nothing. The queen embraced her, and kissed her several times: she could not help shedding tears, when she thought she was on the point of losing her, for she wanted but three months of being fifteen; and, concealing her grief, she related all that concerned the princess in the embassy of the celebrated Becafigue; she even gave her all the rarities he had brought to present to her. She admired them; she praised with good taste that which was the most curious, but from time to time she turned to gaze upon the portrait of the prince with a pleasure she had never known till then.

The ambassador finding that his endeavours to obtain the princess were useless, and that he must be contented with her parents' solemn promise, which he had no reason to doubt, took leave of the king, and returned post to give an account of his mission to his masters.

When the prince found he could not hope to see his dear Désirée for more than three months, he uttered lamentations which distressed the whole court; he could no longer sleep; he could eat nothing; he became sad and thoughtful; the brightness of his complexion changed to the pallid hue of care; he passed whole days lying on a couch in his cabinet, gazing on the portrait of his princess; he wrote to her continually,

and presented the letters to the portrait, as though it was able to read them; at last, becoming gradually weaker, he fell dangerously ill, and it required neither physicians nor doctors to tell the reason.

The king was in despair; he loved his son more tenderly than ever father loved one before. He was on the point of losing him! What an affliction for a parent! He saw no remedy for the malady of the prince. He languished for Désirée; without her he must die. The king resolved therefore, in such an extremity, to go to the king and queen who had promised her to him, to intreat them to have pity upon the situation the prince was reduced to, and defer no longer a marriage which would never happen if they were determined to wait till the princess arrived at the age of fifteen.

This was an extraordinary step to take, but it would have been more extraordinary if he had allowed so amiable and dear a son to perish. Notwithstanding, he met with an insurmountable difficulty, for his age was so great he could only travel in a litter, and this mode accorded very badly with the impatience of his son; so that he desired his faithful Becafigue to travel post, and sent by him the most affecting letters in the world, to induce the king and queen to accede to his wishes.

During all this time Désirée had scarcely less pleasure in looking at the prince's portrait than he had in gazing at hers. Every instant she sought the room in which it was placed; and, however careful she was in disguising her feelings, her attendants did not fail to discover them. Amongst others, Giroflée and Longue-épine, who were her maids of honour, perceived the little anxieties that began to torment her. Giroflée loved her dearly, and was faithful to her. Longue-épine had always nourished a secret jealousy of her merit and her rank. Her mother had educated the princess, and after having been her governess, became her first lady-in-waiting; she ought to have loved her better than anything in the world, but she doted on her own daughter ridiculously, and perceiving her hatred to the lovely princess, she could not wish her well.

The ambassador who had been despatched to the black princess was not well received when she learned the message with which he was charged. The Ethiopian was the most vindictive creature in the world; she thought she was treated very cavalierly, in being thus politely put off, after engagements had been actually entered into with her. She had seen a portrait of the prince, with which she was infatuated, and Ethiopians, when they do love, love to a greater excess than any one else. "How, sir!" said she; "does your master think I am neither rich enough, nor beautiful enough? Travel through my dominions, you will find there are few more extensive. Visit my royal treasury, and you will see more gold than all the mines of Peru have ever yielded; and then look at the blackness of my complexion—this flattened nose, these thick lips: is it not thus one should be to be beautiful?" "Madam," answered the ambassador (who feared the bastinado more than any they had sent to the Sublime Porte), "I blame my master as much as a subject is permitted to do; and, if I had been placed upon the first throne in the universe, I know very well with whom I should

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She looked in the book that tells everything, and she instantly knew that Prince Guerrier had abandoned the Black Princess for the Princess Désirée.

have offered to share it." "That speech has saved your life," said she; "I had determined to commence my revenge upon you; but that would have been unjust, since you are not to blame for the base conduct of your prince. Go and tell him that I am delighted he has broken off with me, because I abhor dishonest people." The ambassador, who wished for nothing better than leave to depart, profited by it as soon as he obtained it.

But the Ethiopian was too much offended with Prince Guerrier to pardon him. She mounted an ivory car drawn by six ostriches that went at the rate of ten leagues an hour; she repaired to the palace of the fairy of the fountain, who was her godmother, and her best friend; she gave an account of her adventure, and intreated her, with the greatest importunity, to avenge her. The fairy felt for her goddaughter's grief—she looked in the book that tells everything, and she instantly knew that Prince Guerrier had abandoned the black princess for the Princess Désirée; that he was passionately in love with her; and that he was even ill from his impatience to see her. This knowledge rekindled her anger, which was nearly extinguished; and, as she had never seen Désirée from the moment of her birth, it is likely that she would not have harmed her if the vindictive blackamoor had not induced her to do so. "How!" cried she; "is this miserable Désirée to be always vexing me? No, charming princess; no, my darling, I will not allow thee to be thus insulted. The heavens and all the elements are interested in this affair; return home, and depend upon thy dear godmother." The black princess thanked her, and made her presents of flowers and fruit, which she received with much pleasure.

The ambassador, Becafigue, posted with the greatest speed to the city where Désirée's father resided; he threw himself at the feet of the king and queen, he shed many tears, and assured them, in the most affecting terms, that Prince Guerrier would die, if they refused him any longer the pleasure of seeing the princess their daughter: that she was fifteen years old all but three months, that nothing serious could happen in so short a space of time; that he took the liberty of making known to them, that so great a belief

in these insignificant fairies was an injury to royal majesty; in short, he pleaded so well that he had the gift of persuasion.

They wept with him at his representation of the sad condition to which the young prince was reduced, and they then told him that they must have some days to decide upon their answer. He replied, that he could only give them a few hours; that it was an extreme case with his master; that he imagined the princess hated him, and that it was she herself who delayed the journey. They then assured him, that before evening he should know what could be done in the matter.

The queen ran to her dear daughter's palace, and told her all that had passed. Désirée's grief was unequalled; her heart failed her, she fainted, and the queen became convinced of her sentiments for the prince. "Do not distress yourself, my dear child," said she, "you are able to cure him. I am only uneasy on account of the threats of the fairy of the fountain at your birth." "I flatter myself, madam," replied she, "that there are some means by which we could outwit the wicked fairy; for instance, could I not go in a coach so closely shut up that I could not see daylight? They might open it at night, to give me something to eat, and I should thus arrive safely at the palace of Prince Guerrier.

The queen fancied this expedient very much; she told the king, who approved of it also; they then sent for Becafigue to come to them directly, and they assured him that the princess should set out instantly, therefore he had nothing more to do than return with this good news to his master; and that, to expedite the matter, they would dispense with the equipage and the rich dresses suitable to her rank. The ambassador, transported with joy, again threw himself at their majesties' feet to thank them, after which he departed without having seen the princess.

The separation from the king and queen would have appeared insupportable to her, if Désirée had been less prepossessed in favour of the prince; but there are some feelings which can stifle nearly all the others. They built her a coach with green velvet outside ornamented with large plates of gold, and lined it with pink and silver brocade embroidered. There were no glass windows in it; it was very large; it shut closer than a box, and one of the first noblemen in the kingdom had charge of the keys which opened the locks they had placed on the doors.

"Around her were the graces seen,
And love himself was fain,
To follow with respectful mien,
A vassal in her train.
With the most majestic air
Heavenly softness blending,
All the willing captives were
Of beauty so transcending.
In brief, like charms, it may be said,
Did Adelaide reveal,
When hither Hymen led the maid,
The bond of peace to seal."[1]

[1] Marie Adelaide, eldest daughter of Victor-Amadeus II., Duke of Savoy. A treaty of peace was concluded between France and Savoy on the 4th of July, 1696; one of the conditions of which was the

They selected but a few officers to accompany her, that a numerous suite might not be a hindrance on the journey, and, after giving her the most beautiful jewellery in the world, and some very rich dresses, after a leave-taking which, I may say, nearly choked the king, the queen, and all the court, so violently did they weep, they locked her up in the coach, with her principal lady-in-waiting, Longue-épine, and Giroflée.

Perhaps it has been forgotten that Longue-épine did not like the princess at all; but she was much in love with Prince Guerrier, for she had seen his speaking likeness. The shaft of cupid had wounded her so acutely, that upon the point of setting out she told her mother that she should die if the princess's marriage took place; and that, if she wished her to live, she must absolutely find out some means to break it off. The lady-in-waiting begged she would not distress herself, that she would endeavour to relieve her pain and make her happy.

When the queen sent her dear child away, she recommended her above all things to the care of this wicked woman. "With what have I not trusted you!" said she, "with more than my life! Take care of my daughter's health; but, above everything, be careful she does not see daylight, or all will be lost; you know with what evils she is threatened, and I have stipulated with Prince Guerrier's ambassador, that until she is fifteen, they will place her in a castle where she will see no light but that from wax candles." The queen loaded the lady with presents, to insure her most scrupulous attention. She promised to watch over the princess's safety, and to send the queen a good account of her the moment they had arrived at their destination.

Thus the king and queen, confiding in her care, felt no uneasiness for their dear daughter, which in some degree moderated their grief at her separation from them: but Longue-épine, who learnt each night from the princess's officers, who opened the coach to give her her supper, the progress they were making towards the city where they were expected, urged her mother to execute her intentions, fearing the king or the prince would come to meet the princess, and that the opportunity would be lost. So about the middle of the day, when the sun's rays were at their height, she suddenly cut the roof of the coach in which they were shut, with a large knife made expressly for the purpose, which she had brought with her. Then, for the first time, Princess Désirée saw the light of day. She had scarcely looked at it, and heaved a deep sigh, when she sprang from the coach in the form of a white hind, and bounded off to the nearest forest, where she hid herself in a dark covert, there to lament unseen the loss of the beautiful form she had so suddenly been deprived of.

The fairy of the fountain, who had brought about this extraordinary event, seeing all those who accompanied the princess in commotion, some following her, others

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marriage of the Princess Adelaide to the Duke of Burgundy, afterwards the Dauphin. The princess was received at Montargis by Louis XIV. on the 5th of November, 1697, and the marriage was celebrated at Versailles on the 7th of December following. This allusion shows that "La Biche au Bois" was not written before the close of that year.

hastening to the city to announce to Prince Guerrier the misfortune that had just occurred, seemed bent on the sudden destruction of creation. The thunder and lightning terrified the boldest, and by her wonderful skill she transported all these persons to an immense distance from the spot, where their presence was objectionable to her.

No one remained but the lady-in-waiting, Longue-épine, and Giroflée. The latter ran after her mistress, making the woods and rocks resound with her name and her own lamentations. The two others, enchanted at being at liberty, lost not a moment in executing their project. Longue-épine dressed herself in Désirées richest apparel. The royal mantle, which had been made for her nuptials, was of unequal costliness, and the crown had diamonds in it twice or thrice as big as one's fist; the sceptre was composed of one single ruby; the globe which she held in her other hand, of a pearl larger than one's head: this was curious, and very heavy to carry; but it was necessary to persuade everybody that she was the princess, and not omit displaying any one of the royal ornaments.

In this attire, followed by her mother, who held the train of her mantle, she set forth towards the city. The counterfeit princess walked gravely, not doubting some persons would come to receive them, and indeed they had scarcely made any progress when they perceived a large body of cavalry, and in the middle two litters glittering with gold and precious stones, drawn by mules ornamented with high plumes of green feathers —that was the princess's favourite colour. The king who was in one, and the sick prince in the other, knew not what to make of the ladies they perceived approaching them. The most eager of the royal train galloped forward, and judged by the magnificence of their dress that they ought to be persons of distinction. They alighted, and accosted them respectfully. "Oblige me by informing me," said Longue-épine to them, "who are in these litters?" "Ladies," replied they, "it is the king, and the prince his son, who come to meet the Princess Désirée." "Go, I beg of you, and tell them she is here," continued she; "a fairy jealous of my good fortune has dispersed all those who accompanied me by a hundred claps of thunder, lightning, and supernatural prodigies; but here is my lady-in-waiting, who has charge of letters from the king my father, and of my jewellery."

The cavaliers immediately kissed the hem of her robe, and hastened to inform the king of the princess's arrival. "How!" cried he, "she comes on foot in broad daylight!" They related all she had told them. The prince, burning with impatience, called them to him, and without asking them any questions, "Acknowledge," said he, "that she is a prodigy of beauty, a miracle, a most accomplished princess." They made no answer, which astonished the prince. "Having too much to say in praise of her," continued he, "you prefer remaining silent?" "My lord, you will see her yourself," said the boldest among them. "The fatigue of travelling has apparently altered her." The prince was much surprised; had he not been so weak, he would have precipitated

himself from his litter, to satisfy his impatience and his curiosity. The king descended from his litter, and, advancing with all his court, he joined the false princess; but, the moment that he cast his eyes upon her, he gave a loud cry, and fell back some paces. "What do I see?" said he; "what perfidy?" "Sire," said the lady-in-waiting, boldly advancing, "this is the Princess Désirée with letters from the king and queen. I also deliver into your hands the casket of jewels which they gave me on setting out."

The king heard all this in a sullen silence, and the prince, leaning upon Becafigue, approached Longue-épine—Oh, ye gods! what became of him upon seeing this girl, whose extraordinary figure frightened him? She was so tall that the princess's robes scarcely reached to her knees; she was frightfully thin; her nose, more hooked than that of a parrot, glowed with a fiery red; never had any teeth been blacker or more irregular; in short, she was as ugly as Désirée was beautiful.

The prince, who was fully possessed with the charming notion of his princess, was transfixed and immoveable at the sight of this woman—he had no power to speak a word, he looked at her with astonishment, and addressing himself to the king—"I am betrayed!" said he. "The wonderful portrait by which I was captivated is nothing like the person they have sent us; they have endeavoured to deceive us, and they have so far succeeded that it will cost me my life." "What do you mean, my lord?" said Longue-épine; "they have sought to deceive you? Know that you will never be deceived in marrying me." Her effrontery and her pride were unexampled. The lady-in-waiting went even beyond this. "Ah! my beautiful princess!" cried she, "where are we come to? Is this the way to receive a personage of your rank? What inconstancy, what behaviour! the king, your father, will have satisfaction for this." "It is we who will have satisfaction," replied the king; "he promised us a beautiful princess; he has sent us a skeleton, a mummy that frightens us. I am no longer surprised that he has kept this lovely treasure hidden for fifteen years, that he might entrap some dupe. The chance has fallen upon us, but revenge is not impossible." "What outrages!" cried the mock princess; "am I not unfortunate to have come here upon the word of such people? See how very wrong it is to be flattered in one's picture; yet does it not happen every day? If for such absurdities princes sent back their affianced brides, few would marry."

The king and the prince, transported with rage, did not deign to answer her; they each remounted their litters, and without further ceremony, one of the body-guards placed the princess behind him, and the lady-in-waiting was similarly treated; they carried them into the city by order of the king; they were shut up in the castle of the three points.

Prince Guerrier was so overwhelmed by the shock he had just received, that his affliction could not find vent, though it filled his heart almost to bursting. When he was able to give utterance to it, what did he not say of his cruel destiny? He was still in love, and the object of his passion was only a picture! His hopes no longer existed;

all the charming ideas he had indulged in of the Princess Désirée had been destroyed; he would rather have died than have married the person whom he now believed to be that princess; in short, no despair had ever equalled his. He could no longer endure the court, and he determined to leave it secretly as soon as his health would permit him, and seek out some solitary place wherein to pass the remainder of his sad life.

He only communicated his plan to the faithful Becafigue; he felt persuaded that he would follow him anywhere, and he preferred talking with him oftener than with any one of the shameful trick they had played him. He scarcely felt better before he departed, and left upon the table in his cabinet a long letter for the king, assuring him that the moment his mind was more at ease he would return to him; but he intreated him in the meantime to think of their mutual revenge, and still to detain the ugly princess a prisoner.

It is easy to imagine the king's grief when he received this letter. The separation from so dear a son nearly killed him. While everybody was endeavouring to console him, the prince and Becafigue were speeding away, and at the end of three days they found themselves in a vast forest, so dark from the thickness of the trees, so agreeable from the freshness of the grass and from the rivulets which flowed in all directions, that the prince, fatigued by the length of his journey, for he was still ill, dismounted, and threw himself dejectedly upon the ground, with his hand under his head, hardly able to speak, he was so weak. "My lord," said Becafigue, "while you are reposing I will seek for fruits to refresh you, and reconnoitre the place a little which we have arrived at." The prince did not answer, he only acknowledged by a sign that he could do so.

It is a long time since we left the hind in the wood; I will now speak of the incomparable princess. She wept like a disconsolate hind, when she saw herself in a fountain, which served as a mirror for her. "What! can this be me?" said she. "Now do I find myself subjected to the strangest fate that could happen in all fairyland to so innocent a princess as I am. How long will my transformation last? Where shall I conceal myself from the lions, bears, and wolves, that they may not devour me? How can I eat grass? In short, she asked herself a thousand questions, and was in the greatest possible grief. It is true, that if anything could console her, it was that she was as beautiful a hind as she had been a beautiful princess.

Becoming very hungry, Désirée nibbled the grass with a good appetite, and was surprised she could do so. Afterwards she lay down on the moss; night overtook her; she passed it in inconceivable alarm. She heard the wild beasts close to her, and often forgetting that she was a hind, she tried to climb some tree. The light of day somewhat reassured her; she admired its beauty, and the sun appeared something so wonderful to her, that she was never wearied with looking at it; all she had ever heard of it appeared to her much below what she now beheld; it was the only consolation she could find in that desert place; she remained there for several days quite by herself.

The fairy, Tulip, who had always loved this princess, deeply felt for her misfortune;

but she was extremely vexed that both she and the queen had paid so little attention to her advice; for she had told them several times, that if the princess set out before she was fifteen she would meet with some evil. However, she would not abandon her to the fury of the fairy of the fountain; and it was she who conducted Giroflée towards the forest, that this faithful confidante might console the princess in her misfortune.

This lovely hind was quietly grazing by the side of a brook, when Giroflée, who could scarcely walk, lay down to rest herself. She was looking very mournfully which way she should go to find her dear princess. When the hind saw her, she suddenly leaped the brook, which was wide and deep, and came and threw herself upon Giroflée, and caressed her a thousand times. She was quite surprised at it; she did not know whether the animals in this province had any particular friendship for people which humanised them, or whether this one knew her—for in fact it was very singular, that a hind should think of doing the honours of the forest so well.

She looked at it earnestly, and saw, with much surprise, large tears falling from its eyes. She no longer doubted that it was her dear princess; she took her feet, and kissed them with as much respect and affection as though she was kissing her hands. She spoke to her, and was convinced that the hind understood her, but she could not answer her; their tears and sighs were redoubled. Giroflée promised her mistress that she would not leave her any more. The hind made a thousand little signs with her head and her eyes, which meant, she should be very glad of it, and that it would console her for some of her troubles.

They remained together nearly all the day. The hind, fearing that her faithful Giroflée would want something to eat, led her to a place in the forest where she had remarked there was some wild fruit that was very good. Giroflée ate a great quantity of it, for she was dying with hunger; but after she had finished her meal, she became very uneasy, not knowing where they should retire for the night—for it was impossible to resolve on remaining in the middle of the forest, exposed to all the perils that might overtake them.

"Are you not afraid, charming hind," said she, "to pass the night here?"

The hind raised her eyes to heaven and sighed.

"But," continued Giroflée, "you have already perambulated a part of this vast desert. Are there no cottages here? No charcoal-burner? No wood-cutter? No hermitage?"

The hind indicated by the movement of her head that she had not seen any.

"Oh, ye gods!" cried Giroflée, "I shall not be alive in the morning: even should *I* be fortunate enough to escape the tigers and bears, I am certain that fright will be sufficient to kill me! And do not imagine, either, my dear princess, that I regret perishing on my own account; it is for your sake. Alas! to leave you here destitute of all consolation, what can be more distressing?"

The little hind began to weep, she sobbed almost like a human being.

Her tears affected the fairy, Tulip, who loved her tenderly, notwithstanding her disobedience. She had always watched over her preservation, and suddenly appearing, she said to her, "I will not scold you, the situation in which I see you distresses me too much."

The hind and Giroflée interrupted her, by throwing themselves at her feet; the former kissed her hands, and caressed her in the prettiest manner possible; the other intreated her to have pity upon the princess, and restore her to her natural form.

"That does not depend upon me," said Tulip; "she who has done her so much mischief is very powerful: but I can shorten her term of punishment; and to mollify it, as soon as day gives place to night, she shall quit the form of a hind—but, as soon as it is dawn, she must return to it, and roam the plains and forests like the other animals."

It was a great relief to cease from being a hind even during the night; the princess expressed her joy by leaping and frisking about, which delighted Tulip. "Proceed," said she to them, "by this little path: you will come to a hut, as good a one as you could expect to find in such a country." So saying, she disappeared. Giroflée followed her directions; she entered with the hind the path before them, and found an old woman seated upon the step of her door finishing an osier basket. Giroflée accosted her: "My good mother, would you let me in here with my hind? I want a small room."

"Yes, my pretty girl," replied she; "I will willingly give you shelter here; come in with your hind." She led them directly into a very pretty room, wainscoted with cherry-tree wood; in it were two little white dimity beds, and fine sheets, and all appeared so simple and clean that the princess has since declared that she never saw anything more to her taste.

As soon as it was quite dark, Désirée ceased to be a hind; she embraced her dear Giroflée a hundred times; she thanked her for her affection, which induced her to follow her fortunes, and promised her she would make her very happy the moment her penance had ended.

The old woman knocked gently at their door and, without entering, gave Giroflée some excellent fruit, which the princess ate with a good appetite. They then went to bed, and as soon as daylight appeared Désirée, having become a hind again, began to scratch at the door, that Giroflée might open it for her. They were both very sorry to be separated, although for so short a time; and the hind, having plunged into the thickest part of the wood, commenced running about there as usual.

I have already said that Prince Guerrier had halted in the forest, and that Becafigue was hunting through it in all directions for some fruit. It was already late when he arrived at the cottage belonging to the good old woman of whom I have spoken. He spoke politely to her, and asked her for several things his master wanted. She hastened to fill a basket, and gave it him. "I fear," said she, "that if you pass the night here without shelter some accident will happen to you. I can offer you a very humble one; but at all events it will save you from the lions.

He thanked her, and said he was with one of his friends, to whom he would go back and propose their coming to her house. In short, he knew so well how to persuade the prince, that he allowed himself to be conducted to the old woman's cottage: she was still at the door, and without making any noise, she led them to a room like the one the princess occupied, and from which it was only separated by a wooden partition.

The prince passed the night a prey to his usual anxieties. As soon as the first rays of the sun were shining in at his windows, he rose, and to divert his sadness, he went into the forest, telling Becafigue not to follow him. He walked for some time without taking any certain path; at length he arrived at rather a spacious place, thickly covered with trees and moss. Instantly a hind started off. He could not help following it—his dominant passion was the chase, but he cared less for it since love had taken possession of his heart. Notwithstanding that, he pursued the poor hind, and from time to time he let fly an arrow at her, which frightened her to death, although she was not wounded, for her friend Tulip preserved her from that; and nothing less than the guardian hand of a fairy could have saved her from perishing from shafts so truly aimed. No one had ever felt so tired as the princess of hinds; such exercise was quite new to her. At last she fortunately took a turn by which the dangerous hunter lost sight of her; and being extremely fatigued himself, gave up the pursuit.

The day having passed in this manner, the hind was delighted when the hour for retiring drew near. She turned her steps towards the house, where Giroflée was impatiently awaiting her. As soon as she was in her chamber, she threw herself upon the bed, quite out of breath, and in a great perspiration. Giroflée caressed her a thousand times, she was dying to hear what had happened to her. The hour for transformation had arrived, and the lovely princess resumed her proper form. "Alas!" said she, "I thought I had nothing to fear but the fairy of the fountain and the cruel inhabitants of the forests; but to-day I have been pursued by a young hunter, whom I

scarcely saw, so hasty was my flight. A thousand arrows, shot after me, threatened me with inevitable death. I am still ignorant by what good fortune I could have been able to escape." "You must not go out any more, my princess," replied Giroflée; "pass in this chamber the fatal time of your penance. I will go to the nearest city, to purchase books to amuse you; we will read the new stories that have been written about the fairies, we will compose verses and songs." "Peace, dear girl," replied the princess, "the charming thought of Prince Guerrier is sufficient to occupy me pleasantly; but the same power which reduces me during the day to the sad condition of a hind, compels me to do as hinds do—I run, I skip, and I eat grass like them. At such times a room would be insupportable to me." She had been so harassed by the chase that she required something to eat immediately; she then closed her two beautiful eyes till the dawn of day. As soon as she perceived it, the usual transformation took place, and she returned to the forest.

The prince, on his part, had returned in the evening, and rejoined his favourite. "I have spent my time," said he, "in running after the most lovely hind I ever saw; she eluded me a hundred times with wonderful dexterity; I took so true an aim at her, that I cannot understand how she could escape untouched. As soon as it is daylight, I shall look for her again, and I will not miss her the next time." In short, the young prince, who wished to drive from his heart the idea of a being he believed to be imaginary, was not sorry that his love for hunting amused him, and returned betimes to the spot where he had found the hind; but she took good care not to go there again, fearing a similar accident to the one she had met with. He looked all around him, and walked about for some time, and, being very much heated, he was delighted to find some apples, the colour of which pleased him; he gathered some, and ate them, and almost immediately he fell into a sound sleep, stretched on the cool grass under some trees, which thousands of birds seemed to have fixed on for their assignations.

While he was sleeping, our timid hind, eager to find a sequestered spot, came to the one in which he was reposing. Had she perceived him sooner, she would have fled: but she found herself so close to him, that she could not help looking at him; and his heavy sleep so emboldened her, that she stood and contemplated his features at her leisure. Oh, ye gods! what became of her when she recognised him! her mind had been too deeply impressed by his charming form for her to have forgotten it in so short a time. Love, love, what wouldst thou, then? Must the hind run the risk of being slain by the hand of her lover? Yes, she exposes herself to that peril; she no longer thinks of her safety. She couched down a little distance from him, with her eyes fixed upon him, not turning them away for an instant. She sighed, she uttered some little plaintive sounds, and at last, becoming bolder, she approached still nearer; she touched him, and he awoke.

His surprise was excessive; he saw it was the same hind that had given him so much exercise and that he had been seeking so long a time for; but to find her so familiar

appeared most extraordinary to him. She did not wait long enough for him to seize her, but ran off with all her might, and he followed with all his. From time to time they stopped to take breath, for the lovely hind was tired from having run so much the evening before, and the prince was not less fatigued than she was. But what caused the hind to slacken her flight? Alas! must I own it? It was the fear of separating herself too far from him, who had wounded her much more by his merit than by the arrows which he shot at her. He remarked she very often turned her head, as though to ask him if he wished her to die by his hand; and when he was on the point of overtaking her, she renewed her efforts to escape. "Ah, if thou couldst understand me, little hind," cried he, "thou wouldst not shun me; I love thee, and would cherish thee; thou art charming; I will take care of thee." The air carried away his words, they did not reach her.

At length, after making the round of the forest, our hind could not run any longer, and slackened her pace. The prince redoubling his, came up with her with a delight which he could scarcely believe it possible he could feel. He evidently saw she had lost all her strength; she was lying down like a poor half-dead little animal, and only expecting her life to be taken by the hands of her conqueror; but instead of being so cruel, he began to caress her. "Beautiful hind," said he, "do not be afraid: I will take thee with me, and thou shalt follow me everywhere." He cut some branches from the trees, twisted them skilfully, and covered them with moss; scattered roses upon them, which he gathered from some bushes in full blossom, then took the hind in his arms, laid her head upon his neck, and placed her gently upon the boughs; after which he sat down near her, seeking from time to time the finest grass, which he gave to her, and which she ate from his hand.

The prince continued to talk to her, although he was persuaded she did not understand him. Notwithstanding the pleasure she felt in looking at him, she became very uneasy as night was approaching. "What will be the consequence," said she to herself, "should he see me suddenly change my form? He will be alarmed and fly from me; or if he do not fly from me, what have I not to fear then alone in this forest?" She could think of nothing but how to escape, when he furnished her with the means himself; for fearing she might want to drink, he went to find some streamlet that he could lead her to. While he was seeking it, she quickly stole away, and safely reached the cottage where Giroflée was waiting for her. She again threw herself upon her bed, night came, her transformation ended, and she appeared in her own form. "Wouldst thou believe it, my dear Giroflée," said she, "my Prince Guerrier is in this forest; it is he who has been hunting me for the last two days, and who, having caught me, caressed me a thousand times. Ah, how untruthful is the portrait they have brought me of him! he is a hundred times handsomer. All the disorder of an eager huntsman's dress, far from detracting from his appearance, gives a charm to it which I cannot explain. Is it not most unfortunate, that I am compelled to fly from this prince, he whom my parents

have chosen for me, he who loves me, and whom I love? A wicked fairy must needs take a dislike to me, from the day I was born, and afflict me for the rest of my life." She began to weep; Giroflée tried to console her, and encourage a hope that her sorrow would soon be changed to happiness.

The prince returned to his dear hind, as soon as he had found a spring, but she was no longer where he had left her. He sought for her everywhere, but in vain; he felt as much vexed with her as though she possessed reason. "What," exclaimed he, "shall I always have cause to complain of this deceitful and unfaithful sex?" He returned to the good woman's cottage very melancholy; he related to his friend the adventure with the hind, and accused her of ingratitude. Becafigue could not help laughing at the prince's rage; he advised him to punish the hind when he met with her again. "I shall only remain here for that purpose," replied the prince; "we will afterwards continue our journey."

Daylight returned, and with it the princess resumed her form of the white hind. She knew not what to do, whether to seek the places the prince generally frequented, or to take an opposite direction and avoid him. She decided upon the latter, and went very far away; but the young prince, who was as cunning as she was, did the same thing, firmly believing she would adopt this little ruse, so that he discovered her in the thickest part of the forest. She was just fancying herself perfectly safe, when she caught sight of him. She instantly bounded up, and jumped over the bushes, and, as if she feared him still more on account of the trick she had played him the preceding evening, she flew faster than the winds; but at the moment she was crossing a path, he took so good an aim at her, that he lodged an arrow in her leg. She was in violent pain, her strength failed her, and she fell.

Cruel and barbarous Cupid, where wert thou then? What! couldst thou suffer an incomparable girl to be wounded by her affectionate lover? The sad catastrophe was inevitable, for the fairy of the fountain intended this to be the end of the adventure. The prince came up: he was sensibly affected to see the hind bleeding. He gathered

some herbs, bound them round her leg, to alleviate the pain of the wound, and made her a new bed of branches. He placed the hind's head upon his knees. "Dost thou not deserve what has happened to thee, little runaway?" said he. "What did I yesterday, that thou shouldst have abandoned me? It shall not happen again to-day; I will take thee with me." The hind did not answer: what could she say? She had done wrong, and could not speak; but it does not always follow that those who are wrong will be silent. The prince lavished a thousand caresses on her. "How grieved I am that I have wounded thee!" said he; "thou wilt hate me, and I would thou shouldst love me." To hear him, it seemed as if some genius secretly inspired him with all he said to the hind. At last the time arrived for returning to the old woman's; he lifted up his game, and was much inconvenienced by carrying it, leading it, and sometimes by dragging it.

She had not the slightest wish to go with him. "What will become of me," said she, "alone with this prince? Ah! I would rather die!" She made herself as heavy as she could and burdensome to him: he was streaming with perspiration from fatigue; and although he was now not far from the cottage, he felt that without assistance he could not get his captive home. He went to seek his faithful Becafigue; but before he quitted the hind, he tied it by several ribbons to the foot of a tree, that it might not get away.

Alas! who could have thought that the most beautiful princess in the world should have been treated thus by a prince who adored her! She tried in vain to break the ribbons; her efforts in doing so drew the knots still tighter, and she had nearly strangled herself with a slip-knot he had unluckily made, when Giroflée, tired of being so long shut up in her chamber, walked out for a little air, and passed by the spot where the white hind was struggling. What was her distress when she perceived her dear mistress! She could not untie the ribbons fast enough, which were knotted in different places; and the prince arrived with Becafigue just as she was about to lead away the hind. "Whatever respect I may have for you, madam," said the prince to her, "you must permit me to object to the robbery you would commit. I have wounded this hind; she is my property; I love her. I intreat you to leave her to me." "My lord," civilly replied Giroflée (for she was very polite and gracious), "this hind belonged to me before she did to you. I would much sooner give up my life than her; and if you would be convinced how well she knows me, I only beg of you to give her a little liberty. "Come, my little white darling," added she, "embrace me;" the hind jumped on her neck. "Kiss my right cheek;" she obeyed. "Feel my heart;" she put her foot there. "Sigh;" she sighed. The prince could no longer doubt what Giroflée told him. "I restore her to you," said he generously, "but, I own, not without much regret." She instantly departed with the hind.

They knew not that the prince lived in their house; he followed them at a distance, and was surprised to see them enter the good old woman's habitation. He went in very shortly after them, and, urged by a movement of curiosity, which the white hind had

given rise to, he inquired who the young woman was. The old dame replied, that she did not know; that she had taken her to lodge there with her hind; that she paid her well; and that she lived very retired. Becafigue asked which was her chamber. She told him it was so close to his, that it was only separated by a partition.

When the prince withdrew, his confidant told him he was the most mistaken of men if that girl had not lived with the Princess Désirée; that he had seen her at the palace when he was there as ambassador. "What sad recollections you awake in my mind!" said the prince; "and by what chance is she here?" "I am ignorant of that, my lord," added Becafigue; but I wish to see her again, and as it is merely a slight piece of carpenter's work that separates us, I am going to make a hole in it." "Mere useless curiosity," sadly replied the prince; for Becafigue's words had renewed all his grief: and with that he opened the window, which looked into the forest, and sat at it, ruminating.

In the meanwhile Becafigue set to work, and in a very short time had made a hole sufficiently large to perceive the charming princess, dressed in a robe of silver brocade, with crimson flowers embroidered with gold and emeralds. Her hair fell in large curls upon the most beautiful neck in the world, her complexion was brilliant, and her eyes were entrancing. Giroflée was on her knees before her, binding up her arm, from which the blood was flowing profusely. They both of them appeared much perplexed by this wound. "Leave me to die," said the princess; "death would be sweeter to me than the deplorable life I lead. What! must I become a hind every day, to see him to whom I am betrothed without speaking to him, without informing him of my fatal accident? Alas! if thou knewest all the tender things he said to me while in my other shape; how sweet the tone of his voice; how noble and fascinating his manners; thou wouldst pity much more than thou dost now my inability to enlighten him as to my fate."

One may easily imagine Becafigue's astonishment at all that he saw and heard. He ran to the prince—he dragged him from the window, with inexpressible transports of joy. "Ah! my lord," said he, "lose no time in approaching that partition; you will then see the real original of the portrait which charmed you." The prince looked through the aperture, and immediately recognised the princess. He would have died with delight if he had not feared he was deceived by some enchantment; for how could he reconcile such a surprising adventure with the existence of Longue-épine and her mother, who were imprisoned in the castle of the three points, and who had taken the name, one of Désirée, and the other of her lady-in-waiting.

His passion, however, flattered him. We are naturally inclined to persuade ourselves of the truth of that which we desire; and upon such an occasion one must die with impatience, or obtain an explanation. Without a moment's delay, he went and knocked gently at the door where the princess was. Giroflée, never doubting but that it was the good old woman, and needing her assistance to bandage her mistress's arm, hastened to open the door; and was much surprised to see the prince, who entered, and threw himself at the feet of Désirée. The transports which excited him interfered so much to

prevent his making any connected speech, that, notwithstanding the pains I have taken to ascertain exactly what he said in these first moments, I have found no one who could much enlighten me on the subject. The princess felt equally perplexed to answer him; but love, who often acts as interpreter to dumb people, became a third in the party, and persuaded them both that nothing had ever been said so well, or at least nothing so touching and so tender. Tears, sighs, vows, and even some sweet smiles succeeded. Thus passed the night. Daylight appeared without Désirée ever thinking about it; and she did not, as usual, take the form of a hind. Nothing could equal her joy at this discovery; she was too fond of the prince not to make him the partaker of her delight. She then recited her history to him, which she did with a natural grace and eloquence that far surpassed that of the most skilful narrator.

"What!" exclaimed the prince, "my charming princess! is it you I wounded under the form of a white hind? What can I do to expiate so great a crime? Will it suffice to die with grief before your eyes?" He was so sadly afflicted that his distress was painfully visible in his countenance. Désirée suffered more from that than from her wound. She assured him it was a mere trifle, and that she could not help blessing an accident which procured her so much happiness.

The manner in which she spoke to him was so kind, that he could not doubt of her love for him. To explain everything in his turn, he told her the trick that Longue-épine and her mother had played him; adding, that he must hasten to send and tell the king his father the happiness that had occurred to him in finding her; for that he was going to war on account of the insult he believed had been offered him. Désirée begged him to write by Becafigue. He was about to obey her, when a shrill noise of trumpets, clarions, kettle and other drums, echoed through the forest; they heard also the tramp of many people passing near the cottage. The prince looked out of the window: he recognised several officers, his own colours and standards. He ordered them to halt and wait for him.

Never was any surprise more agreeable than that experienced by this army; they all imagined that their prince was going to lead them, and be revenged upon Désirée's father. The prince's father, notwithstanding his great age, was at their head. He travelled in a litter of velvet embroidered in gold, followed by an open chariot, in which was Longue-épine and her mother. Prince Guerrier, catching sight of the litter, ran to it; and the king, holding out his arms to him, embraced him with a thousand tokens of paternal affection. "And whence come you, my dear son?" cried he. "How could you possibly deliver me up to the grief your absence has caused me?" "My lord," said the prince, "deign to listen to me." The king immediately descended from his litter, and retiring into a side path, his son told him of his fortunate meeting with the princess, and Longue-épine's imposture.

The king, enchanted at this event, raised his hands and eyes gratefully to heaven; at the same moment he saw the Princess Désirée, more beautiful and more brilliant than all the stars together. She was mounted on a superb horse, which curveted at every

step; a hundred various-coloured feathers adorned her head, and her dress was enriched with the largest diamonds in the world. She was attired as a huntress. Giroflée, who followed her, was scarcely less splendid. All this was the effect of the fairy, Tulip's, protection: she had managed it all with care and success. The pretty house in the wood was built by her, expressly for the princess; and, under the disguise of an old woman, she had entertained her for several days.

As soon as the prince had recognised his troops, and gone to seek the king his father, the fairy entered Désirée's chamber. She breathed upon her arm and cured her wound. She then gave her the rich dress in which she appeared before the king, who was so charmed he could scarcely believe her to be mortal. He said all that one can imagine most courteous upon such an occasion, and intreated her not to delay making his subjects happy by becoming their queen. "For," continued he, "I am resolved to give up my kingdom to Prince Guerrier, to render him more worthy of you." Désirée replied with all the politeness that might be expected from so well-bred a person; then, casting her eyes upon the two prisoners who were in the chariot, and who hid their faces with their hands, she had the generosity to ask for their pardon, and that they might be sent in the same chariot wherever they would wish to go. The king consented to her request; not without admiring and praising her for her kindness of heart.

The army was ordered to march back again. The prince mounted a horse, that he might accompany his lovely princess. They were received in the capital with a thousand shouts of joy; everything was prepared for the nuptials, which were rendered more solemn by the presence of the six benignant fairies who loved the princess. They made her the richest presents that could possibly be imagined; among others, the magnificent palace, where the queen had been to see them, appeared suddenly in the air, carried by fifty thousand cupids, who placed it in a beautiful plain on the bank of the river. No greater gift could possibly be bestowed upon her.

The faithful Becafigue intreated his master to speak to Giroflée for him, that he might be united to her when he married the princess. The prince did so willingly; that amiable girl was very happy to meet with so advantageous an establishment on her arrival in a foreign kingdom. The fairy, Tulip, who was even more liberal than her sisters, presented her with four gold mines in the Indies, that her husband should not be able to say he was richer than herself. The prince's wedding festivities continued for several months—each day produced a fresh amusement, and the adventures of the white hind were sung throughout the world.

"Of the princess, too much in haste
The pleasures of the world to taste,
And quit a home sagacious fays
Had built to hide her from its blaze,
The troubles and the transformations
Prove to what perils and temptations
The youthful maid exposed may be,
The world too soon allowed to see.

"And you, to whom love's liberal hand
Has given charms few can withstand,
Discreetly use your dangerous power;
For beauty has its fatal hour.
Think not around to scatter darts,
And keep unscathed your reckless hearts,
A shaft may strike on one of stone,
And, glancing, wound to death your own."

# THE WHITE CAT

ONCE upon a time there was a king who had three brave and handsome sons. He was afraid they might become anxious to reign during his lifetime. There were even some whispers in circulation that they sought to make partisans with a view of depriving him of his kingdom. The king felt he was growing old; but his mental capacity being undiminished, he had no fancy for vacating in their favour a place he filled so worthily. He thought, therefore, that the best way to live in peace was by amusing them with promises which he could always elude the performance of. He called them into his closet, and after having spoken very kindly to them he added, "You will agree with me, my dear children, that my great age forbids my applying myself to the business of the state with so much assiduity as formerly. I fear my subjects may suffer from this circumstance. I wish to transfer my crown to one of you; but to deserve such a gift, it is but just that you should on your parts seek to please me. Now, as I contemplate retiring into the country, it appears to me that a pretty, faithful, and intelligent little dog would be an excellent companion for me. So in lieu of preferring my eldest to my youngest son, I declare to you, that whichever of you three shall bring me the handsomest little dog shall forthwith become my heir."

The princes were exceedingly surprised at the inclination the king expressed for a little dog; but the two youngest saw they might find their account in it, and accepted with pleasure the commission to go in search of one. The eldest was too timid or too respectful to urge his own right. They took leave of the king, who distributed

amongst them money and jewels, adding that the following year, without fail, on the same day and hour they would return and bring him their little dogs.

Before setting out, they repaired to a castle within a league of the city, assembled therein their most intimate friends, and gave splendid banquets, at which the three brothers pledged to each other an eternal friendship, and declared that they would act in the affair in question without jealousy or mortification, and that the successful candidate would be always ready to share his fortune with the others. At length they departed, agreeing to meet on their return at the same castle, thence to proceed together to the king. They declined having any followers, and changed their names that they might not be known.

Each took a different road. The two eldest met with many adventures; but I shall only recount those of the youngest. He was well-mannered, of a gay and joyous temperament, had an admirable head, a noble figure, regular features, fine teeth, was very skilful in all exercise that became a prince, sang agreeably, touched the lute and the theorbo with a delicacy that charmed every one; could paint; in one word, was highly accomplished; and as to his courage, it amounted to intrepidity.

Scarcely a day passed that he did not buy dogs, big or little: greyhounds, mastiffs, bloodhounds, pointers, spaniels, water-dogs, lapdogs; the instant he found one handsomer than the other, he let the first go to keep the new purchase; for it would have been impossible for him to lead about by himself thirty or forty thousand dogs, and he persevered in his determination to have neither gentlemen, nor valets de chambre, nor pages in his train. He continued his journey without having any fixed point to proceed to, when night, accompanied with thunder and rain, surprised him in a forest through which he was no longer able to trace a path.

He took the first he could find, and after having walked a long way, he saw a glimmer of light, which convinced him that there was some habitation near him in which he might find shelter till the morning. Guided by the light, he came to the gate of the most magnificent castle that could ever be imagined. This gate was of gold covered with carbuncles, the pure and vivid light of which illuminated all the neighbourhood. It was this light which the prince had perceived at a great distance. The walls were of transparent porcelain of several colours, on which were represented the histories of all the fairies from the beginning of the world to that day. The famous adventures of Peau d'Ane,[1] Finette, the Orange-tree, Gracieuse, the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood, Green Serpent, and a hundred others, were not forgotten. He was delighted to meet amongst them, with Prince Sprite; for he was his uncle, according to the fashion of Brittany.[2] The rain and storm prevented his staying longer on a spot

[1] A fairy tale by Perrault, author also of "The Sleeping Beauty." The rest are by the Countess herself, and contained in this volume.

[2] "Au uncle à la mode de Bretagne," is the cousin-german of the father or the mother, but it is used to signify a very distant degree of relationship.

where he was being wetted to the skin; besides which he could not see anything beyond where the light of the carbuncles extended to.

He returned to the golden gate. He saw a kid's foot attached to a chain of diamonds. He admired all this magnificence, and the security in which the owners of the castle appeared to live. "For, after all," said he, "what is to prevent thieves from coming and cutting down this chain and pulling the carbuncles off the gate? They would enrich themselves for ever."

He pulled the kid's foot, and immediately heard a bell ring, which seemed by its sound to be of gold or silver; a moment after, the gate was opened without his perceiving anything except a dozen of hands in the air, each of which held a flambeau. He was so astonished that he hesitated to advance; when he felt other hands which pushed him forwards with gentle violence. He moved on, therefore, with some distrust, and at all risks, keeping his hand on the hilt of his sword; but on entering a vestibule entirely incrusted with porphyry and lapis lazuli, he heard two enchanting voices which sang these words:—

"Start not at the hands you see,
Nor fear in this delightful place
Aught, except a lovely face,
If from love your heart would flee."

He could not believe that he was invited so graciously for the purpose of eventually injuring him; so that, feeling himself pushed towards a large gate of coral, which opened directly that he approached it, he entered a saloon of mother-of-pearl, and afterwards passed through several apartments variously ornamented, and so rich with paintings and jewels, that he was perfectly enchanted with them. Thousands and thousands of lights, from the vaulted roof of the saloon down to the floor, illuminated a portion of the other apartments, which were also filled with chandeliers, girandoles, and stages covered with wax-candles; in fact, the magnificence was so great that it was not easy to imagine the possibility of it.

After having passed through sixty rooms, the hands that conducted him stopped him. He saw a large easy-chair moving by itself towards the fireplace. At the same moment the fire was lighted, and the hands, which appeared to him very handsome, white, small, plump, and well-shaped, began to undress him; for he was wet through, as I have already told you, and they were afraid he would catch cold. They presented him, still without his seeing any one, with a shirt as fine as if it was for a wedding-day, and a morning gown of some rich stuff shot with gold, and embroidered with little emeralds in ciphers. The bodiless hands moved a table close to him on which his toilet was set out. Nothing could be more magnificent. They combed him with a lightness and a skill which was very agreeable to him. Finally, they dressed him again, but not in his own clothes; they brought him others much richer. He observed with silent wonder all that took place, and occasionally felt some slight alarm, which he could not altogether conquer.

After they had powdered, curled, perfumed, adorned, attired, and made him look handsomer than Adonis, the hands led him into a hall superbly gilt and furnished; around it were represented the stories of all the most famous cats. Rodilardus hung by the heels in the Council of Rats,[1] Puss in Boots, Marquis of Carabas,[2] The Writing Cat,[3] The Cat that became a Woman,[4] Witches in the Shape of Cats, their Sabbat,[5] and all its ceremonies. In short, nothing was ever more curious than these paintings.

The cloth was laid, and there were two covers, each accompanied by its golden cadenas.[6] The buffet astonished him, by the quantity of cups upon it of rock crystal and a thousand rare stones. The prince could not imagine for whom the two covers were placed, when he saw several cats take their places in a small orchestra, fitted up expressly for them. One held a music-book, the notes in which were of the most extraordinary kind; another a roll of paper to beat time with; and the rest had little guitars.

Suddenly each began to mew in a different tone, and to scratch the strings of their guitars with their claws. It was the strangest music that had ever been heard. The prince would have thought himself in the infernal regions if he had not found the palace too marvellously beautiful to permit him to fall into such an error; but he stopped his ears and laughed heartily at the sight of the various postures and grimaces of these novel musicians.

He was meditating on the different things that had already happened to him in the château, when he saw a little figure enter the hall, scarcely a cubit in height. This poppet was covered with a long black crape veil. Two cats preceded it dressed in deep mourning and wearing cloaks and swords; a numerous train of cats followed, some carrying rat-traps full of rats, and others mice in cages.

The prince could not recover from his astonishment; he knew not what to think. The little black figure approached, and lifting its veil he perceived the most beautiful little white cat that ever was or ever will be. She had a very youthful and very melancholy air, and commenced a mewing so soft and sweet, that it went straight to the heart. "Son of a king," said she to the prince, "thou art welcome; my mewing majesty beholds thee with pleasure." "Madam cat," said the prince, "it

[1] La Fontaine, "Le Chat et le Vieux Rat."—Fable 18, liv. iii.

[2] "Le Chat Botté" of Perrault was then a new story.

[3] "Le Chat qui écrit:" a popular exhibition of the period.

[4] La Fontaine: "La Chatte Metamorphosée en Femme."—Fable 18, liv. ii.

[5] The Sabbat signifies a nocturnal meeting of witches, wherein the form feline was a favourite assumption.

[6] The cadenas was a box of gold, silver, or silver gilt, standing on three small metal balls, with a case in it which contained the knife, fork, and spoon of the king or any other royal personage. It was probably so called from the lock under which it was kept as a security against poison. Even the saucepans were sometimes padlocked for the same reason. Madame d'Aulnoy, in her "Travels in Spain," tells an amusing story of the Archbishop of Burgos going to bed supperless, because his cook, to prevent the gallant prelate sharing his Olla with the countess, pretended to have lost the key of the silver saucepan in the snow.—Letter vi., 13th March, 1679.

is very generous of you to receive me with so much attention: but you do not appear to me to be an ordinary little animal. The gift you have of speech, and the superb castle you inhabit, are sufficient evidence to the contrary." "Son of a king," rejoined the white cat, "I pray thee cease to pay me compliments. I am plain in my language and my manners; but I have a kind heart. Come," continued she, "let them serve supper and bid the concert cease; for the prince does not understand what they are singing." "And are they then singing any words, madam?" inquired he. "Undoubtedly," she answered; "we have poets here of considerable talent, and if you remain amongst us some little time, you will be convinced of the fact." "It is only for you to say so and to be believed," replied the prince politely; "but I must also consider you, madam, a cat of a very rare description."

The supper was served up. It was placed on the table by the hands of invisible bodies. First, there were two soups, one of pigeons and the other of very fat mice. The sight of the latter prevented the prince from touching the former, believing that the same cook had concocted both; but the little cat, who guessed from the face he made what was passing in his mind, assured him that their meals had been cooked separately, and that he might eat what was set before him with the perfect assurance that there were neither rats nor mice in it.

The prince did not wait to be told twice, feeling satisfied that the pretty little cat had no wish to deceive him. He observed that she had on her paw a miniature set in a bracelet. This surprised him. He begged her to show it to him; supposing it to be that of Master Minagrobis.[1] He was astonished to find it the portrait of a young man so handsome, that it was almost incredible nature could have formed such a being, and who resembled himself so greatly, that he could not have been better painted. The white cat sighed, and becoming still more melancholy, she observed a profound silence.

[1] A cat's name derived from La Fontaine and Rabelais.

The prince saw clearly that there was something extraordinary connected with the portrait, but did not venture to ask any questions, for fear of displeasing the cat or afflicting her. He entertained her with the relation of all the news he was in possession of, and found her intimately acquainted with the various interests of princes and other things passing in the world. After supper the white cat invited her guest to enter a saloon, in which there was a theatre, wherein twelve cats and twelve monkeys danced a ballet. One party was dressed as Moors, the other as Chinese. It is easy to imagine the leaps and capers they executed; and every now and then they gave each other a scratch or two. Thus finished the evening. The white cat said "Good night" to her guest; the hands who had been his conductors so far, took hold of him again and led him into an apartment quite different from any he had seen. It was not so magnificent as it was elegant. The hangings were all of butterflies' wings; the various colours of which formed a thousand different flowers. There were also the feathers of exceedingly rare birds, and which, perhaps, have never been seen elsewhere. The bed-furniture was of gauze, tied up with a thousand bows of ribbon. There were large mirrors from the ceiling to the floor, with frames of chased gold, representing a thousand little cupids.

The prince went to bed without saying a word, for there were no means of talking with the hands that waited upon him; he slept little, and was awakened by a confused noise. The hands immediately lifted him out of bed, and dressed him in a hunting habit. He looked into the courtyard of the castle, and perceived more than five hundred cats, some of whom led greyhounds in the slips, others were blowing the horn. It was a grand fête-day. White cat was going to hunt, and wished the prince to accompany her. The officious hands presented him with a wooden horse, which went full gallop and kept up the pace wonderfully. He made some objection to mounting it, saying that it wanted but little to make him a knight-errant like Don Quixote; but his resistance was useless; they placed him on the wooden horse. The housings and saddle of it were embroidered with gold and diamonds. White cat rode a monkey, the handsomest and proudest that had ever been seen. She had thrown off her long veil, and wore a dragoon's cap, which made her look so bold that she frightened all the mice in the neighbourhood. Never was there a more agreeable hunting party. The cats outran the rabbits and hares, and as fast as they caught them white cat had the curée[1] made in her presence, and a thousand skilful feats were performed, to the great gratification of the whole company. The birds, on their part, were by no means safe, for the kittens climbed the trees, and the great monkey carried white cat up even to the nests of the eagles, to place at her mercy their little highnesses the eaglets.

The hunt being over, the white cat took a horn, about the length of one's finger, but which gave out a tone so clear and loud that it was easily heard ten leagues off. As soon as she had sounded two or three flourishes, she was surrounded by all the cats in

[1] Making the curée is a hunting term, which signifies the rewarding the hawks or hounds with portions of the prey upon the spot.

the country. Some appeared in the air, riding in chariots; others came in boats by water; in short, so many were never seen together before. They were nearly all dressed in different fashions, and, attended by this splendid train, she returned to the castle, requesting the prince to accompany her. He was perfectly willing to do so, notwithstanding that so much caterwauling smacked a little of a witch's festival, and that the talking cat astonished him beyond all the rest.

As soon as she reached home, she put on her great black veil. She supped with the prince, who was hungry, and did justice to the good cheer. They brought him some liqueurs, which he sipped with much satisfaction, and they immediately effaced all recollection of the little dog he was to find for the king. He no longer thought of anything but mewing with white cat, that is to say, remaining her kind and faithful companion. He passed his days in agreeable amusements, sometimes fishing, sometimes hunting. After which there were ballets, carousals,[1] and a thousand other things which entertained him exceedingly. Even the beautiful cat herself frequently composed verses and sonnets so full of passionate tenderness, that it seemed as if she had a susceptible heart, and that no one could speak as she did without being in love. But her secretary, who was an old cat, wrote such a vile scrawl, that, although her works have been preserved, it is impossible to read them.

The prince had forgotten even the land of his birth. The hands, of which I have spoken, continued to wait upon him. He regretted sometimes that he was not a cat, to pass his whole life in such excellent company. "Alas," said to white cat, "how wretched it will make me to leave you! I love you so dearly! Either become a woman, or make me a cat." She was amused by his wish, and returned him some mysterious answers, out of which he could scarcely make anything. A year flies away quickly when one has neither care nor pain, when one is merry and in good health. White cat knew the time at which the prince was bound to return, and as he thought no more of it, she reminded him. "Dost know," said she, "that thou hast only three days left to look for the little dog that the king thy father wishes for, and that thy brothers have already found several very beautiful?" The prince's memory returned to him, and, astonished at his negligence, "What secret spell," he exclaimed, "could have made me forget a thing, the most important to me in the world? My honour and my fortune are staked upon it. Where shall I find such a dog as will win a kingdom for me, and a horse swift enough to perform such a journey in so short a time?" He began to be very anxious and sorrowful.

White cat said to him, with much sweetness, "Son of a king, do not distress thyself, I am thy friend. Thou mayest yet remain here one day longer; and, although it is five hundred leagues from this to your country, the good wooden horse will carry you there in less than twelve hours." "I thank you, beautiful cat," said the prince; "but it is

[1] These grand equestrian spectacles reached the height of their magnificence and popularity in the reign of Louis XIV.

not sufficient for me merely to return to my father; I must take him a little dog." "Hold," said white cat, "here is an acorn which contains one more beautiful than the dog-star." "Oh, madam cat," cried the prince, "your majesty jests with me." "Put the acorn to your ear," rejoined she, "and you will hear it bark." He obeyed her, and immediately the little dog went "bow, wow," which transported the prince with delight, for such a dog as could be contained in an acorn was certain to be very diminutive indeed.

He was going to open the acorn, so eager was he to see the dog, but white cat told him that it might catch cold on the journey, and it would be better for him to wait till he was in the presence of his royal father. He thanked her a thousand times, and took a most tender leave of her. "I assure you," he added, "that the days I have passed with you have flown so quickly, that I regret in some measure leaving you behind me; and although you are a sovereign here, and all the cats that compose your court possess much more wit and gallantry than ours, I do not hesitate to invite you to come with me." The cat replied to this invitation only by a deep sigh.

They parted: the prince was the first to reach the castle where he had appointed to meet his brothers. They arrived shortly after him, and were surprised to see a wooden horse in the courtyard which curveted with more grace than any one sees in the riding schools.

The prince came forward to receive them, they embraced several times, and recounted their travels to each other; but our prince kept his principal adventures a secret from his brothers, and showed them an ugly turnspit, observing, that he thought it so beautiful that he had selected it for presentation to the king. Notwithstanding the friendship that existed between the brothers, the two eldest felt a secret joy at the bad taste of their younger brother. Being seated at table, they trod on each other's toes, by way of signifying that they had not much to fear on that account.

The next morning they set out together in the same coach. The king's two eldest sons carried in baskets some little dogs, so beautiful and delicate that one could scarcely venture to touch them. The youngest son carried the poor turnspit, which was so filthy that nobody could bear the sight of it. As soon as they set foot in the palace, everybody surrounded them to welcome them back to court. They entered the king's apartment. He was puzzled in whose favour to decide, for the little dogs which were presented to him by the two eldest were so nearly equal to each other in beauty; and they had already begun to dispute the right of succession, when their younger brother reconciled them by taking out of his pocket the acorn which the white cat had given him. He opened it immediately, and then everybody beheld a little dog lying upon cotton. It passed through a ring without touching any part of it. The prince placed it on the floor, and it began directly to dance a saraband with the castanets, as lightly as the most celebrated Spanish dancer. It was of a thousand different colours; its hair and its ears swept the ground. The king was dumfounded, for it was impossible to find a word to

say against the beauty of Toutou. Nevertheless, he was by no means inclined to resign his crown. The smallest fleur-de-lis in its circle was dearer to him than all the dogs in the universe. He told his children, therefore, that he was gratified by the trouble they had taken; but that they had succeeded so well in fulfilling the first request he had made to them, that he should test their ability again before he performed his promise. He therefore gave them a year to travel over land and sea, in quest of a piece of cloth so fine that it would pass through the eye of a needle used to make Venetian point-lace with. They were all three exceedingly chagrined to be obliged to go upon a new voyage of discovery. The two princes, whose dogs were less beautiful than that of the youngest, consented. Each took his own way, without so many professions of friendship as before, for the turnspit had rather cooled their ardour.

Our prince remounted his wooden horse, and without wishing to find other assistance than he might hope for from the friendship of white cat, he set out at full speed, and returned to the castle where he had been so kindly received by her. He found all the doors open. The windows, the roofs, the towers, and the walls were all illuminated by a hundred thousand lamps, which produced a wonderful effect. The hands which had waited so well upon him advanced to meet him, and took the bridle of the excellent wooden horse, which they led to the stable, while the prince entered white cat's apartments.

She was lying in a little basket on a very neat mattress of white satin. She was in her morning cap, and seemed low-spirited, but when she perceived the prince she cut a thousand capers, and played as many gambols to testify her delight to him. "Whatever reason I had to hope you would return," said she to him, "I confess, son of a king, that I dared not flatter myself by indulging in it, and I am generally so unfortunate in matters that concern me that this is an agreeable surprise." The grateful prince caressed her a thousand times. He recounted to her the success of his journey, which she knew perhaps better than he did, and that the king wanted a piece of cloth which could pass

through the eye of a needle; that in truth he believed it was impossible to find such a thing, but that he had not hesitated to make the attempt, relying implicitly upon her friendship and assistance. White cat, assuming a more serious air, told him it was a matter that demanded consideration; that, fortunately, there were some cats in her castle who spun exceedingly well; that she would put a claw to it herself, and forward the work as much as possible, so that he might rest contented without going further in search of what he would more readily find in her castle than in any other place in the world.

The hands appeared, bearing flambeaux, and the prince, following them with white cat, entered a magnificent gallery running along the side of a large river, on which there was an astonishing display of fireworks. Four cats were to be burnt there, that had been tried and sentenced in due form. They were accused of having eaten the roast meat provided for the white cat's supper, her cheese, her milk, and even of having conspired against her life with Martafax and L'Hermite, two famous rats of that country, and held as such by La Fontaine, a very faithful historian: but with all that, it was well known there was a great deal of cabal in the matter, and that the majority of the witnesses had been tampered with. However this might be, the prince obtained their pardon. The fireworks did no injury to any one, and never yet were seen such splendid sky-rockets.

After this, a very nice supper was served, which gave the prince more gratification than the fireworks, for he was very hungry, and the wooden horse had brought him at such a pace that he had never ridden so hard before in his life. The following days were passed like those that had preceded them, in a thousand various entertainments with which the ingenious white cat regaled her guest. Our prince is probably the first mortal who ever found so much amusement amongst cats, without any other society.

It is true that white cat was possessed of agreeable, sweet, and almost universal talent. She was wiser than a cat is allowed to be. The prince was sometimes astonished at her knowledge. "No," said he, "it is not natural for you to possess all these wonderful qualities I discover in you. If you love me, charming pussy, explain to me by what miracle you are enabled to think and speak so perfectly, that you might be elected a member of the most famous Academy of Arts and Sciences?" "Cease to question me, son of a king," said she to him; "I am not allowed to answer; and thou mayest carry thy conjectures as far as thou wilt without my contradicting thee. Let it suffice that I have always a velvet paw for thee, and that I take an affectionate interest in all that concerns thee."

The second year slipped away as insensibly as the first. The prince could scarcely think of anything that the diligent hands did not instantly provide him with, whether books, jewels, pictures, antique medals; in short, he had but to say I want a certain gem that is in the cabinet of the Great Mogul or of the King of Persia, or such a statue in Corinth or any part of Greece, and he saw it instantly before him,

without knowing how it came or who brought it. This was not without its charms, and as a relaxation, it is sometimes very agreeable to see one's self the possessor of the finest treasures in the world.

White cat, who was ever watchful for the prince's welfare, warned him that the hour of departure was approaching, that he might make himself easy about the piece of cloth which he required, and that she had made a most wonderful one for him. She added, that it was her intention, this time, to furnish him with an equipage worthy his birth; and, without waiting for his reply, she compelled him to look into the great courtyard of the castle. He saw in it an open calèche, of gold, enamelled flame-colour, with a thousand gallant devices, which satisfied the mind as much as the eye. It was drawn by twelve horses as white as snow, four-and-four abreast, their harness being of flame-coloured velvet embroidered with diamonds and plated with gold. The calèche was lined to match, and a hundred coaches, each with eight horses, filled with noblemen of high bearing, very superbly attired, followed the calèche. There was also an escort of a thousand body-guards, whose uniforms were so covered with embroidery that you could not see the stuff they were made of. It was a remarkable feature of this cavalcade that the portrait of white cat was to be observed in every part of it, either in the devices on the calèche or on the uniforms of the body-guard, or attached by a ribbon to the doublets of those who formed the train, as if it were a new order with which she had decorated them.

"Go," said she to the prince, "go and appear at the court of the king, thy father, in such sumptuous state, that thy magnificence may make an impression upon him and prevent his again refusing to bestow on thee the crown thou deservest. Here is a walnut. Crack it but in his presence, and thou wilt find in it the piece of cloth thou hast asked me for." "Amiable white cat," said he to her, "I protest to you that I am so penetrated by your bounties, that, if you would consent, I should prefer passing my life here with you to all the grandeur which I have reason to expect elsewhere." "Son of a king," replied she, "I am convinced of the kindness of thy heart. It is a rare article amongst princes. They would be loved by everybody, yet not love any one themselves. But thou art a proof that the rule has its exception. I give thee credit for the affection thou displayest for a little white cat that after all is good for nothing but to catch mice." The prince kissed her paw and departed. We should have some difficulty in believing the speed with which he travelled if we were not already aware of the way in which the wooden horse had carried him in less than two days a distance of five hundred leagues from the castle; so that, impelled by the same power, these other steeds travelled so swiftly that they were only four-and-twenty hours on the road, stopping nowhere till they reached the king's palace, to which the two elder brothers had already repaired, and, not seeing their youngest, congratulated themselves on his negligence, and whispered to each other, "Here's a piece of good luck! He is either dead or very ill. He will not be our rival in the

important business which is about to be decided." They immediately displayed their cloths, which were, in truth, so fine that they could pass them through the eye of a large needle, but not through that of a small one; and the king, very glad of this pretext for refusal, produced the needle he had previously selected, and which the magistrates, by his order, had brought out of the City Treasury, wherein it had been carefully kept in the meanwhile.

There was much murmuring at this objection. The friends of the princes, and particularly those of the eldest, for his cloth was of the finest texture, protested that it was a downright piece of chicanery, in which there was equal ingenuity and Normanism.[1] The king's parasites contended that he was only bound by the conditions he had proposed. At length, to settle the matter, a fine flourish was heard of trumpets kettle-drums, and hautboys: it announced the arrival of our prince in all his pomp and paraphernalia. The king and his two other sons were all equally astonished at such great magnificence.

After the prince had respectfully saluted his father and embraced his brothers, he took out of a box covered with rubies, the walnut, which he cracked, expecting to find in it the boasted piece of cloth; but in lieu of it there was a hazel nut. He cracked that also, and was surprised to see in it a cherry-stone. Everybody looked at one another, and the king laughed in his sleeve, and jeered at the notion of his son being credulous enough to believe he could bring a whole piece of cloth in a walnut; but why should he not have believed it, when he had already given him a little dog that had come out of an acorn? He therefore cracked the cherry-stone, which was filled with its kernel. A great murmur then arose in the apartment. Nothing was heard but the opinion that the young prince had been duped in this adventure. He made no answer to the raillery of the courtiers; he opened the kernel and found in it a grain of wheat, and in the grain of wheat a millet seed. Ah! in truth he began to doubt, and muttered between his teeth, "White cat, white cat, thou hast fooled me!" At that moment he felt a cat's claw upon his hand, which gave him such a scratch that the blood came. He knew not whether this scratch was given to encourage or to dishearten him; nevertheless, he opened the millet seed, and great was the astonishment of the whole company when he drew out of it a piece of cloth four hundred ells in length, so wonderfully wrought, that all the birds, beasts, and fishes were seen in their natural colours, with the trees, fruits, and plants of the earth; the rocks, curiosities and shells of the ocean; the sun, the moon, the great and lesser stars and planets of the sky. There were also the portraits of all the kings and other sovereigns at that time reigning in the world, with those of their wives, of their mistresses, of their children, and of all their subjects, not forgetting the tiniest little urchin—every one, in his particular class of life, accurately represented, and dressed in the habit of his country.

[1] See note to page 65.

When the king saw this piece of cloth, he became as pale as the prince had become red with confusion at having been so long finding it. The needle was produced, and the prince passed and repassed the cloth through the eye of it six times. The king and the two eldest princes looked on in sullen silence, except when the beauty and curiosity of the cloth forced them occasionally to acknowledge there was nothing that could be compared to it in the universe.

The king heaved a deep sigh, and, turning towards his children, "Nothing," said he, "could give me so much consolation in my old age as observing the deference paid by you to my wishes. I am therefore desirous to put your obedience to a new test.

Go and travel for another year, and he who, at the end of it, brings back with him the most beautiful maiden, shall marry her, and be crowned king on his wedding-day. It is, besides, necessary that my successor should marry, and I swear, I pledge my honour, that I will no longer defer bestowing the reward I have promised."

All the injustice of this proceeding fell upon our prince. The little dog and the piece of cloth were worth ten kingdoms rather than one, but he was so well bred that he would not dispute the will of his father, and without hesitation he re-entered his calèche. All his train followed him, and he took the road back to his dear white cat. She knew the day and the moment he would arrive. All the way was strewn with flowers; thousands of vases of perfume smoked on all sides, and particularly within the castle. White cat was seated on a Persian carpet, under a pavilion of cloth of gold, in a gallery, from whence she could see him approach. He was received by the hands that had always attended upon him. All the cats climbed up into the gutters to welcome him with a desperate squalling.

"So, son of a king," said white cat to him, "thou hast returned once more without the crown." "Madam," he replied, "your bounties placed me in a position to gain it; but I am convinced that it would have given the king more pain to part with it than I could have received pleasure from its possession." "No matter," said she, thou must

neglect nothing to deserve it. I will assist thee in this matter, and as thou art bound to take back with thee a beautiful maid to thy father's court, I will find one for thee who shall gain thee the prize. In the meanwhile let us be merry. I have ordered a naval combat between my cats and the terrible rats of this country. My cats will, perhaps, be a little embarrassed, for they are afraid of the water; but otherwise they would have had too much the advantage, and one ought, as much as possible, to equalise matters." The prince admired the prudence of madam puss. He praised her exceedingly, and accompanied her to a terrace which overlooked the sea.

The ships in which the cats were embarked were large pieces of cork, on which they sailed conveniently enough. The rats had joined together several egg-shells, and of these their navy consisted. The battle was cruelly obstinate. The rats flung themselves into the water, and swam much better than the cats, so that they were victors and vanquished alternately twenty times; but Minagrobis, admiral of the feline fleet, reduced the rattish race to the greatest despair. He devoured the general of their forces, an old rat of great experience, who had been round the world three times, in capital ships, in which he was neither captain nor common sailor, but simply a lickspit.

White cat would not permit the utter destruction of all these poor unfortunate creatures. She was an acute politician, and calculated that if there were no more rats or mice left in the country, her subjects would live in a state of idleness, which might become highly prejudicial to her. The prince passed this year as he had the two preceding, that is to say, in hunting, fishing, or chess, at which white cat played exceedingly well. He could not help occasionally questioning her anew as to the miraculous power by which she was enabled to speak. He asked her whether she was a fairy, or whether she had been transformed into a cat; but as she never said anything but what she chose, she also never made answers that were not perfectly agreeable to her, and consequently her replies consisted of a number of little words which signified nothing particular, so that he clearly perceived she was not inclined to make him a partaker of her secret.

Nothing runs away faster than time passed without trouble or sorrow, and if the cat had not been careful to remember the day when it was necessary the prince should return to court, it is certain that he would have absolutely forgotten it. She informed him on the evening preceding it that it only depended on himself to take home with him one of the most beautiful princesses in the world; that the hour to destroy the fatal work of the fairies had at length arrived, and for that purpose he must resolve to cut off her head and her tail, and fling them quickly into the fire. "I!" exclaimed the prince, "Blanchette! My love! I be so barbarous as to kill you! Ah! you would doubtless try my heart; but rest assured that it is incapable of forgetting the love and gratitude it owes you." "No, son of a king," continued she, "I do not suspect thee of ingratitude. I know thy worth. It is neither thou nor I who in this affair can control our destiny. Do as I bid thee. We shall both of us begin to be happy,

countenance, that she was quite well, that she was going to get up, and that at length the gates, so well bolted and barred, of the fairy palace, would be opened for her to enter and eat the fine fruit, and take away with her as much as she liked.

"There was not one of her ladies who did not believe the queen to be delirious, and that her mind was at that moment running on the fruit she had so much wished for, so that instead of answering her, they began to weep, and went and woke all the physicians, that they might come and see the state her majesty was in.

"This delay exasperated the queen. She ordered them to bring her clothes to her directly. They refused. She flew in a passion, and became scarlet with rage. They attributed it to the effect of fever: but the physicians having arrived, after feeling her pulse and going through the usual ceremonies, could not deny that she was in perfect health. Her women, who perceived the error into which their zeal had betrayed them, endeavoured to atone for it by dressing her as quickly as possible. Each of them asked her majesty's pardon; peace was restored, and the queen hastened to follow the old fairy, who was still waiting for her.

"She entered the palace, which required no addition to make it the most beautiful place in the world.

"You will easily believe it, my lord," added queen white cat, "when I tell you it was that in which we are at present: two other fairies, a little younger than the one who conducted my mother, received her at the gate, and welcomed her very graciously. She begged they would lead her directly into the garden, and to those espaliers where she would find the best fruit. 'It is all equally good,' said they to her, 'and if it were not that you desired to have the pleasure of picking it yourself, we have only to call the fruit we wish for, and it would come to us here.' 'I implore you, ladies,' said the queen, 'to satisfy me by so extraordinary a sight.' The eldest fairy put her finger into her mouth and whistled three times, then cried, 'Apricots, peaches, nectarines, brunions,[1] cherries, plums, pears, bigaroons, melons, muscatel grapes, apples, oranges, lemons, gooseberries, strawberries, raspberries, come at my call!' 'But,' said the queen, 'all the fruit you have summoned is not to be found at the same season.' 'In our orchard,' they replied, 'we have all the fruits of the earth, always ripe, always excellent, and they never spoil or rot.'

"Meanwhile the fruit came rolling in over the floor pell-mell, but without being bruised or dirtied; so that the queen, impatient to satisfy her longing, threw herself upon it, and took the first that came to hand, devouring rather than eating it.

"After having partly satisfied her appetite, she begged the fairies to let her proceed to the espaliers, that she might have the pleasure of choosing the fruit on the tree, and then gathering it. 'We give thee free permission,' said they, 'but remember the promis thou hast made us, thou wilt not be allowed to recall it!' 'I am convinced,' said she

[1] A sort of peach.

get over the garden walls, and they would have succeeded in doing so if the said walls had not visibly increased in height though no one was seen to work at them. They lengthened the ladders by tying two or three together, but they broke under the weight of those who mounted them, and who either lamed or killed themselves.

"The queen was in despair. She saw the great trees laden with fruit which looked delicious. She was determined to eat some, or die. She therefore had some very splendid tents pitched before the castle, and remained there six weeks with all her court. She neither slept nor ate; she sighed unceasingly; she talked of nothing but the fruit of the inaccessible garden. At length she fell dangerously ill, without any one soever being able to find the least remedy for her complaint, for the inexorable fairies had never so much as even appeared since she had established herself in front of the castle. All her officers afflicted themselves exceedingly. Nothing was to be heard but sobs and sighs, while the dying queen kept asking for fruit from her attendants, but cared for none except that which was denied her.

"One night, having felt a little drowsy, she saw on reopening her eyes, a little old woman, ugly and decrepit, seated in an arm-chair at the head of her bed. She was surprised that her women had suffered a stranger to come so near her, when the old woman said to her, 'We think thy majesty very obstinate in persisting in thy desire to eat of our fruit: but since thy precious life depends upon it, my sisters and I consent to give thee as much as thou canst carry away with thee, as well as what thou mayest eat upon the spot, provided thou wilt give us something in exchange.' 'Ah! my good mother,' exclaimed the queen; 'speak! I will give you my kingdoms, my heart, my soul! I cannot purchase such fruit at too high a price.' 'We wish,' said the fairy, 'for the daughter that thou art about to bring into the world. As soon as she is born, we will come and fetch her: she will be brought up amongst us. There are no virtues, no charms, no accomplishments, with which we will not endow her. In a word, she will be our child; we will make her happy: but observe, that thy majesty will see her no more until she be married. If this proposal is agreeable to thee, I will cure thee instantly, and lead thee into our orchard. Notwithstanding that it is night, thou wilt be able to see well enough to pick the fruit thou mayest fancy. If what I have said do not please thee, good-night, queen; I am going to bed.'

"'Hard as the condition may be which you impose upon me,' replied the queen, 'I will accept it sooner than die, for I am satisfied I could not live another day, and my infant would therefore perish with me. Cure me, wise fairy,' continued she, 'and delay not a moment my enjoyment of the privilege you have promised to grant me?'

"The fairy touched her with a little golden wand, saying, 'Let thy majesty be free from all the ills that confine thee to this bed!' It seemed immediately to the queen as if some one were divesting her of a heavy and stiff robe which had oppressed her, and that some portions of it clung to her still. This was apparently in the places most affected by her disorder. She sent for all her ladies, and told them, with a smiling

countenance, that she was quite well, that she was going to get up, and that at length the gates, so well bolted and barred, of the fairy palace, would be opened for her to enter and eat the fine fruit, and take away with her as much as she liked.

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'that you live so well here, and this palace appears to me so handsome, that if I did not love the king my husband dearly, I should propose to remain here with you as well as my daughter; you need have no fear, therefore, of my retracting my word.'

"The fairies, perfectly satisfied, opened all their gardens and inclosures to her; she remained in them three days and three nights without wishing to go out again; so delicious did she find them. She gathered fruit to take home with her, and as it would not spoil, she had four thousand mules laden with it. The fairies, in addition to the fruit, gave her golden baskets of the most exquisite make to put it in, and many rarities of exceeding value. They promised her that I should be educated like a princess, that they would make me perfection, and choose a husband for me; that she should receive notice of the nuptials, and that they hoped for her presence at them.

"The king was enraptured at the return of the queen. All the court testified its delight to her. There were nothing but balls, masquerades, runnings at the ring, and banquets, at which the queen's fruit was served as a delicious treat. The king ate of it in preference to anything that could be presented to him. He knew not of the bargain the queen had made with the fairies, and often asked her into what country she had travelled to find such good things.

"At one time she told him they were found on an almost inaccessible mountain; at another she said they grew in some valleys; and at others, again, in a garden or in a great forest. The king was surprised at so many contradictions. He questioned those who had accompanied her: but she had so strictly forbidden them to tell any one of her adventure, that they dared not speak of it. At length the queen, becoming uneasy respecting her promise to the fairies, as the time approached for her confinement, fell into an alarming melancholy. She sighed eternally, and looked daily worse and worse. The king grew anxious; he pressed the queen to reveal to him the cause of her sadness, and after a great deal of trouble she informed him of all that had passed between her and the fairies, and how she had promised to give them the daughter she was about to bring into the world. 'What!' said the king, 'we have no children, you know how much I desire to have some, and for the sake of eating two or three apples you are capable of having given away your daughter? You can have no affection for me!' Thereupon he overwhelmed her with a thousand reproaches, which were almost the death of my poor mother; but that did not satisfy him, he had her locked up in a tower, and surrounded it with soldiers to prevent her having communication with anybody in the world except the officers of her household, and of these he changed such as had been with her at the fairy castle.

"The misunderstanding between the king and the queen threw the whole court into infinite consternation. Everybody changed their fine clothes for such as were more suitable to the general sorrow. The king, on his part, appeared inexorable. He never saw his wife, and as soon as I was born he had me brought into the palace to be nursed, while she remained a most unhappy prisoner. The fairies knew all that took place;

they became irritated, they would have me, they looked upon me as their property and my detention as a theft.

"Before they sought for a vengeance proportionate to their vexation, they sent a grand embassy to the king to warn him to set the queen at liberty, to restore her to his favour, and to beg him also to deliver me up to their ambassadors, in order that I might be nursed and brought up by the fairies. The ambassadors were so little and so deformed (for they were hideous dwarfs) that they had not the power of persuading the king to comply with their request. He refused bluntly, and if they had not taken their departure instantly something worse might have happened to them. When the fairies heard of my father's conduct, they were indignant to the greatest degree, and after having desolated his six kingdoms by the infliction of every ill they could think of, they let loose a terrific dragon, that poisoned the air wherever he passed, devouring man and child, and killed all the trees and plants he breathed on.

"The king was in the deepest despair. He consulted all the wise men in his dominions as to what he ought to do to protect his subjects from the misfortunes with which he saw them overwhelmed. They advised him to seek throughout the world for the best physicians and the most excellent remedies; and, on the other hand, to offer a free pardon to all malefactors under sentence of death who would undertake to fight the dragon. The king, approving this advice, acted upon it directly; but without success, for the mortality continued, and the dragon devoured all who attacked him: so that at last the king had recourse to a fairy who had been his friend from his earliest infancy. She was very old, and scarcely ever left her bed. He went to see her, and reproached her a thousand times over for permitting fate to persecute him without coming to his assistance. 'What would you have me do?' said she. 'You have irritated my sisters. They are as powerful as I am, and we rarely act against one another. Try to appease them by giving up your daughter to them. The little princess belongs to them of right. You have put the queen into prison. What has that amiable woman done to you that you should treat her so severely? Make up your mind to redeem her pledge to the fairies; I assure you you will be greatly rewarded for it.'

"The king my father loved me dearly; but seeing no other mode of saving his kingdoms and delivering himself from the fatal dragon, he told his friend he would take her advice; that he was willing to give me up to the fairies, as she had assured him that I should be cherished and treated as a princess of my rank ought to be; that he would also take the queen back to court, and that she had only to name the person to whom he should confide the task of carrying me to the fairy castle. 'You must take her,' she said, 'in her cradle, to the top of the mountain of flowers. You may even remain in its vicinity, if you please, to witness the entertainment that will take place there.' The king told her that in the course of a week he would proceed thither with the queen, and begged she would give notice to her sister fairies of his intention, that they might make whatever arrangements they considered necessary.

"As soon as he returned to the palace he sent for the queen, and received her with as much affection and distinction as he had exhibited haste and anger in her imprisonment. She was so wasted and depressed that he would scarcely have recognised her, had not his heart assured him she was the same person he had formerly loved so tenderly. He implored her, with tears in his eyes, to forget the misery he had caused her, assuring her it was the last she should ever experience on his account. She replied that she had brought it upon herself by her imprudence in promising her daughter to the fairies, and if anything could plead in her favour it was only the condition to which she was reduced. The king then informed her that he had determined to place me in the hands of the fairies. The queen, in her turn, opposed this intention. It seemed as if some fatality attended the affair, and that I was doomed to be always a subject of dissension between my father and mother. After she had groaned and wept for a considerable time without obtaining her object (for the king saw too clearly the fatal consequences of hesitating, and our subjects continued to perish as if they were answerable for the faults of our family), she consented to all he desired, and every preparation was made for the ceremony.

"I was placed in a cradle of mother-of-pearl, ornamented with everything art could imagine that was most elegant. It was hung round with garlands and festoons of flowers, composed of jewels, the different colours of which reflected the rays of the sun with such dazzling splendour, that you could scarcely look at them. The magnificence of my clothing surpassed, if it could be possible, that of the cradle. All the bands of my swaddling clothes were formed of large pearls. Four-and-twenty princesses of the blood-royal carried me on a sort of very light litter. Their dresses were all different, but they were not allowed to wear any colour but white, in token of my innocence. All the court accompanied me according to the order of precedence.

"While we were ascending the mountain a melodious symphony was heard more and more distinctly. At length the fairies appeared to the number of thirty-six. They had invited their friends to accompany them. Each was seated in a pearly shell, larger than that in which Venus arose out of the ocean. Sea-horses, that seemed rather awkward in getting over the ground, drew these pearly cars, the occupants more sumptuous in appearance than the greatest queens in the universe, but at the same time excessively old and ugly. They carried olive branches, to signify to the king that his submission had found favour with them; and when I was presented to them, their caresses were so extraordinary, that it seemed as if they had no object in living, except to make me happy. The dragon they had made the instrument of their vengeance on my father followed them in chains of diamonds. They took me in their arms, kissed me a thousand times, endowed me with various qualifications, and then began to dance the fairy brawl.[1] It is a very lively dance, and you would scarcely believe how well

[1] In French, branle. The brawl was the dance with which balls were generally opened. The company took hands in a circle, and gave each other continual shakes, the steps changing with the time.

these old ladies jumped and capered. After this, the dragon that had devoured so many people crawled forward. The three fairies to whom my mother had promised me seated themselves on it, placed my cradle between them, and striking the dragon with a wand, it immediately spread its great scaly wings, finer than gauze, and glittering with all sorts of extraordinary colours, and in this way they returned to their castle. My mother, on seeing me in the air, upon this terrible dragon, could not help screaming loudly. The king consoled her with the assurance his friend the old fairy had given him, that no accident would happen to me, and that I should be taken as much care of as if I had remained in his own palace. She was pacified by this assurance, though she felt much distressed at the idea of being separated from me for so long a time, and having only herself to blame for it; for if she had not insisted on eating the fruit of that garden, I should have been brought up in my father's dominions, and never have suffered the misfortunes which I have still to relate to you.

"Know then, son of a king, that my guardians had built a tower, expressly for my habitation, in which there were a thousand beautiful apartments suitable for each season of the year, magnificent furniture, and amusing books; but without a door, so that it could only be entered by the windows, which were placed prodigiously high. On the top of the tower was a beautiful garden, ornamented with flowers, fountains, and green arbours, where you might be cool in the hottest of the dog-days. In this place I was brought up by the fairies with a care even beyond all they had promised the queen. My dresses were made in the highest fashion, and so magnificent that any one to see me would have thought it was my wedding day. I was taught everything befitting my age and my rank. I did not give them much trouble, for there were few things I did not learn with the greatest ease. My docility was very agreeable to them, and as I had never seen any other persons, I might have lived there in perfect tranquillity all the rest of my life.

"They always came to see me, mounted on the terrible dragon I have already spoken of. They never talked to me about the king or the queen. They called me their daughter, and I believed myself to be so. Nobody lived with me in the tower, but a parrot and a little dog, which they had given me to amuse me; for the creatures were endowed with reason, and spoke admirably.

"On one side of the tower was a hollow way, full of deep ruts and trees which choked up the road, so that I had not seen any one pass by since I had been shut up there. But one day that I was at the window, talking with my parrot and my dog, I heard a noise; I looked all about, and perceived a young cavalier who had stopped to listen to our conversation. I had never seen a young man before but in a painting. I was not sorry that an unlooked-for accident had afforded me this opportunity; so that, not dreaming of the danger that attends the gratification of contemplating a charming object, I came forward to gaze upon him, and the more I looked at him the more was I delighted. He made me a profound bow, fixed his eyes on me, and appeared greatly

embarrassed to find some way of conversing with me, for my window was very high, and he feared being overheard, for he knew well enough that I was in the fairies' castle.

"The night came suddenly upon us, or, to speak more correctly, it came without our perceiving it; he blew his horn twice or thrice, and entertained me with a few flourishes upon it, and then took his departure without my being able to ascertain which way he went—so dark was the night. I remained very thoughtful; I no longer felt the same pleasure in talking to my parrot and my dog that I had been wont to do. They said the prettiest things in the world to me, for fairy creatures are very witty; but my mind was preoccupied, and I was too artless to conceal it. Perroquet remarked it. He was a shrewd bird; he betrayed no sign of what was running in his head.

"I did not fail being up as soon as it was light. I ran to my window, and was most agreeably surprised to perceive the young knight at the foot of the tower. He was magnificently attired. I flattered myself it was partly on my account, and I was not mistaken. He addressed me through a sort of speaking trumpet, by the aid of which he informed me, that having been up to that time insensible to the charms of all the beauties he had seen, he suddenly felt himself so strongly smitten by mine, that he could not imagine it was possible for him to live without seeing me every day of his life. I was mightily pleased with this compliment, and very much vexed that I did not dare reply to it, for I should have been compelled to bawl with all my might, and still run the risk of being better heard by the fairies than by him. I threw him some flowers I had in my hand, which he received as a signal favour, kissing them several times, and thanking me. He then asked me if I should approve of his coming every day at the same hour under my windows, and if so, to throw him something else. I had a turquoise ring on my finger, which I pulled off instantly, and flung to him in all haste, making signs to him to decamp as quickly as possible, for I heard on the other side of the tower the fairy Violente, who was mounting her dragon to bring me my breakfast.

"The first words she uttered on entering my apartment were, 'I smell the voice of a man here. Search, dragon!' Oh, what a state was I in! I was sinking with fear that the monster would fly out at the opposite window, and follow the cavalier, for whom I already felt deeply interested. 'Indeed, my good mamma,' said I (for the old fairy would have me call her so), 'you are jesting, surely, when you say you smell the voice of a man. Is it possible to smell a voice? And if so, what mortal would be rash enough to venture climbing this tower?' 'What you say is true, daughter,' replied she; 'I am delighted to hear you argue so nicely, and I fancy it is the hatred I have of all men that makes me sometimes imagine they are near me.' She gave me my breakfast and my spindle. 'When you have breakfasted do not forget to spin,' said she, 'for you did nothing yesterday, and my sisters will be angry with you.' In fact, I had been so occupied with the stranger that I had found it quite impossible to spin.

"As soon as the fairy was gone, I flung away my spindle with a little rebellious air, and ascended the terrace to look out as far as I could. I had an excellent telescope; there was nothing to interrupt the view. I looked in every direction, and discovered my cavalier on the summit of a mountain. He was reposing beneath a rich pavilion of cloth of gold, and surrounded by a very numerous court. I felt satisfied he was the son of some king who reigned in the vicinity of the fairies' palace. As I feared that if he returned to the tower he would be discovered by the terrible dragon, I went and fetched my parrot, and told him to fly to that mountain, where he would find the person who had spoken to me, and beg him in my name never to come again, as I was alarmed at the vigilance of my guardians, and the probability of their doing him some mischief. Perroquet executed his commission like a parrot of sense. The courtiers were all surprised to see him come flying at full speed, perch upon their master's shoulder and whisper in his ear. The king (for such he proved to be) was both delighted and troubled by this message. My anxiety on his account was flattering to his heart; but the many difficulties there were in the way of his speaking with me, distressed without being able to dissuade him from the attempt to make himself agreeable to me. He asked Perroquet a hundred questions, and Perroquet asked him as many in return, for he was naturally inquisitive. The king gave him a ring to bring me in return for my turquoise. It was a turquoise also; but much finer than mine, and cut in the shape of a heart, and surrounded with diamonds. 'It is fit,' said he to the parrot, 'that I should treat you as an ambassador. I therefore present you with my portrait. Show it to no one but your charming mistress.' He tied the miniature under the bird's wing, who brought the ring to me in his beak.

"I awaited the return of my little green courier with an impatience I had never known before. He told me that the personage to whom I had sent him was a great king; that he had been most kindly received by him, and that I might rest assured he only lived for my sake; that, notwithstanding there was much danger in coming to the foot of the tower, he was resolved to brave everything sooner than renounce the pleasure of seeing me. These tidings perplexed me sadly, and I began to weep. Perroquet and my little dog Toutou did their best to console me, for they loved me tenderly; and then Perroquet gave me the king's ring, and showed me his portrait. I confess I had never been so delighted as I was by being thus enabled to contemplate closely the image of him I had only seen at a distance. He appeared to me much more charming than I had supposed. A hundred ideas rushed into my mind, some agreeable, some distressing, and gave an expression of great anxiety to my features. The fairies who came to see me perceived it. They observed to each other that I was no doubt tired of my dull life, and that it was time for them to find a husband for me of fairy race. They named several, and fixed at last upon little King Migonnet, whose kingdom was about five hundred leagues off; but that was a trifle. Perroquet overheard this fine council. He flew to give me an account of it, and said to me, 'Ah, how I pity you, my dear mistress,

if you should become the queen of Migonnet! He is a monkey that would frighten you! I am sorry to say so; but in truth, the king who loves you would not condescend to have him for his footman!' 'Have you seen him, Perroquet?' 'I believe so, indeed!' continued the bird; 'I was brought up on the same branch with him.' 'How! on a branch!' I exclaimed. 'Yes,' said he, 'he has feet like an eagle.'

"Such an account as this afflicted me extremely. I gazed on the charming portrait of the young king. I felt sure he had only bestowed it on Perroquet to give me the opportunity of seeing it, and when I compared it with the description of Migonnet, I felt I had nothing more to hope for in life, and I resolved to die rather than marry the latter.

"I had no sleep all night. Perroquet and Toutou talked matters over with me. I dozed a little towards daybreak, and as my dog had a good nose he smelt that the king was at the foot of the tower. He woke Perroquet; 'I will lay a wager,' said he, 'the king is below.' Perroquet replied, 'Hold thy peace, babbler; because thine own eyes and ears are almost always open, thou enviest the repose of others.' 'But bet something, then,' insisted the good Toutou; 'I am sure he is there.' 'And I am sure he is not there,' replied Perroquet. 'Have I not forbidden him to come here in my mistress's name?' 'Oh! truly thou art amusing, with thy forbiddings,' exclaimed my dog; 'a man in love consults only his heart;' and therewith he began to pull Perroquet by the wings so roughly that he made him angry. The noise they both made woke me; they acquainted me with the cause of it. I ran, or rather flew, to my window. I saw the king, who extended his arms towards me, and said through his trumpet that he could no longer live without me; that he implored me to find means to escape from my tower, or to enable him to enter it. That he called all the gods and all the elements to witness that he would marry me immediately, and that I should be one of the greatest queens in the world.

"I ordered Perroquet to go and tell him that what he desired appeared to me an impossibility; but, nevertheless, relying on the word he had pledged to me, and the oath he had taken, I would endeavour to accomplish his wishes. That I conjured him not to come every day, as he might at length be observed, and that the fairies would have no mercy upon him.

"He retired full of joy at the hope I had flattered him with, and I found myself in the greatest embarrassment when I began to reflect on the promise I had made to him. How was I to escape from that tower in which there were no doors? And to have no one to help me but Perroquet and Toutou! I, so young, so inexperienced, so timid! I resolved therefore not to make an attempt I could never succeed in, and I sent word to that effect by Perroquet to the king. He was at first about to kill himself before the bird's eyes; but at length he charged him to persuade me either to come and witness his death or to bring him some comfort. 'Sire,' exclaimed my feathered ambassador, 'my mistress is sufficiently willing: she only lacks the power.'

"When the bird repeated to me all that had passed, I felt more wretched than ever. The fairy Violente came to see me. She found me with my eyes red and swollen; she observed that I had been crying, and said, that unless I told her the cause she would burn me alive: her threats were always terrible. I replied, trembling, that I was tired of spinning, and that I wanted to make some little nets to catch the young birds in that came and pecked the fruit in my garden. 'Thou shalt cry no longer for that, daughter,' said she, 'I will bring thee as much twine as thou needest;' and in truth I received it that very evening; but she advised me to think less of working than of attending to my personal appearance, as King Migonnet was shortly expected. I shuddered at those fatal tidings, and made no reply.

"As soon as she was gone, I began to make two or three pieces of net; but my object was to construct a rope ladder, which I succeeded in doing very well, though I had never seen one. The fairy, in fact, did not furnish me with as much twine as I wanted, and continually said to me, 'Why, daughter, thy work is like that of Penelope; it never progresses, and yet thou art still asking for more material.' 'Oh, my good mamma,' I replied, 'it is easy for you to talk. Don't you see that I am very awkward at my work, and burn a great deal of it. Are you afraid I shall ruin you in pack thread?' My air of simplicity amused her, though she was a very ill-tempered and cruel creature.

"I sent Perroquet to tell the king to come on a certain evening under the window of the tower, where he would find the ladder, and that he would learn the rest when he arrived. In fact, I fastened it as securely as possible, being determined to make my escape with him; but the moment he saw it, without waiting for me to descend, he mounted it eagerly, and jumped into my apartment just as I was preparing everything for my flight.

"The sight of him delighted me so much that I forgot the peril in which we were placed. He renewed all his vows, and implored me not to delay becoming his wife. We took Perroquet and Toutou as witnesses of our marriage. Never was a wedding between two persons of such exalted rank celebrated with less publicity or noise, and never were two hearts so perfectly happy as ours.

"Day had not dawned when the king left me. I had related to him the dreadful intention of the fairies to marry me to little Migonnet. I described to him his person, which horrified him as much as it had me. The hours seemed long years to me after the king's departure. I ran to the window, and followed him with my eyes, notwithstanding the darkness; but what was my astonishment at seeing in the air a fiery chariot drawn by winged salamanders, whose flight was so rapid the eye could scarcely follow them. The chariot was escorted by several soldiers mounted on ostriches. I had not time enough to distinguish who the ugly creature was thus posting through the sky; but I readily imagined that it must be either a fairy or an enchanter.

"Shortly afterwards, the fairy Violente entered my apartment. 'I bring thee good

news,' said she to me. 'Thy lover has arrived within these few hours; prepare to receive him. Here are dresses and jewels for thee!' 'And who has told you,' I exclaimed, 'that I desire to be married? It is very far from my intention. Send King Migonnet away again, I will not add a pin to my dress; let him think me handsome or ugly, I am not going to be his.' 'Hey day! Hey day!' rejoined the fairy, 'here's a little rebel! Here's a head without any brains in it! I am not to be trifled with, and I warn thee—' 'What will you do to me?' cried I, reddening at the names she had called me; 'can I be more miserably situated than I am already in this tower, with only a dog and a parrot, and seeing several times a day the horrible form of a dreadful dragon!' 'Hah, thou ungrateful little wretch,' said the fairy, 'dost thou deserve so much care and pains as we have taken with thee? I have too often told my sisters we should reap a sorry reward for it.' She departed to seek them; she related to them our quarrel; they were as much surprised at it as she was.

"Perroquet and Toutou remonstrated with me, and assured me, that if I continued refractory, they foresaw that I should suffer some terrible misfortunes. I felt so proud of possessing the heart of a great king, that I despised the fairies and the advice of my poor little companions. I did not dress myself, and I took pleasure in combing my hair the wrong way, in order that Migonnet might think me ugly. Our interview took place on the terrace. He came in his fiery chariot. Never since dwarfs have existed has there been seen one so diminutive. He walked upon his eagle's feet and on his knees at the same time, for he had no bones in his legs, so that he was obliged to support himself on a pair of diamond crutches. His royal mantle was only half an ell long, and yet more than a third of it dragged on the ground. His head was as large as a peck measure, and his nose was so big, that a dozen birds sat upon it, whose warbling entertained him. He had such a bushy beard, that canary-birds made their nests in it; and his ears rose a cubit higher than his head; but they were not very perceptible, in consequence of the high-pointed crown that he wore to make him appear taller. The flames of his chariot roasted the fruit, scorched the flowers, and dried up the fountains in my garden. He approached with open arms to embrace me. I held myself bolt upright, and his principal equerry was compelled to lift him; but as soon as he was brought near me, I fled into my apartment, and fastened the door and the windows, so that Migonnet returned to the fairies highly incensed against me.

"They begged his pardon a thousand times for my rudeness, and to appease him, for he was much to be feared, they determined to bring him into my chamber at night, while I slept, to tie me hand and foot, and place me in his fiery chariot, to be taken away by him. Having decided on this plan, they scarcely said a cross word to me about my rude behaviour to him, but merely advised me to think of making amends for it. Perroquet and Toutou were astonished at such great kindness. 'Do you know, mistress,' said my dog, 'my heart misgives me. My lady fairies are strange personages, and particularly Violente.' 'I laughed at these fears, and awaited my dear husband's

arrival with the greatest anxiety. He was too impatient to see me, to keep me long waiting. I threw him the rope-ladder, fully resolved to fly with him. He mounted it lightly, and said such tender things to me, that I dare not even now recall them to mind.

"While we were conversing together as calmly as if we had been in his own palace, the windows of my room were suddenly burst in. The fairies entered upon their terrible dragon. Migonnet followed them in his fiery chariot, attended by all his guards on their ostriches. The king fearlessly drew his sword, and only thought of saving me from the most dreadful fate that ever awaited mortal; for, in short, must I speak it, my lord, those barbarous creatures urged their dragon upon him, which devoured him before my eyes.

"Distracted at his fate and my own, I flung myself into the jaws of the horrible monster, hoping he would swallow me, as he had already swallowed all I loved in the world. He was equally willing to do so; but the fairies, still more cruel than the dragon, would not permit it. 'She must be reserved,' they cried, 'for more protracted agony; a speedy death is too mild a punishment for this unworthy creature!' They touched me, and I immediately found myself assume the form of a white cat. They conducted me to this superb palace, which belonged to my father.[1] They transformed all the lords and ladies of the kingdom into cats, left only the hands visible of the rest of his court, and reduced me to the deplorable condition in which you found me, after informing me of my birth, the death of my father and mother, and that I could only be released from my cat-like form by a prince who should perfectly resemble the husband they had deprived me of. It is you, my lord, who bear that resemblance," continued she: "you have the same features, the same air, the same voice. I was struck by it the moment I saw you. I was aware of all that has happened, and I am equally so of all that will happen. My troubles are about to end." "And mine, lovely queen," said the prince, flinging himself at her feet; "how long are they to last?" "I already love you more than my life, my lord," said the queen; "you must return to your father; we will ascertain his sentiments respecting me, and whether he will consent to what you desire."

She went out of the castle, the prince gave her his hand; she got into a chariot with him. It was much more magnificent than those she had previously provided for him. The rest of the equipage corresponded with it to such an extent, that the horses were all shod with emeralds, the nails being diamonds; such a thing has perhaps never been seen except on that occasion. I shall not repeat the agreeable conversation that took place between the queen and the prince on their journey. If her beauty was matchless, her mind was no less so, and the young prince was equally perfect, so that they interchanged all sorts of charming ideas.

[1] This is a singular oversight. The white cat has previously told the prince that the castle they are in is identical with the fairy castle. See page 354.

When they reached the neighbourhood of the castle, in which the prince was to meet his two elder brothers, the queen entered a little rock of crystal, the points of which were ornamented with gold and rubies. It was completely surrounded by curtains, in order that no one should see it, and carried by some very handsome young men superbly attired. The prince remained in the chariot. He perceived his brothers walking with two princesses, who were exceedingly beautiful. As soon as they recognised him, they advanced to receive him, and inquired, if he had brought a lady with him. He replied, that he had been so unfortunate throughout his journey as to have met with none but very ugly ones, and that the only rarity he had brought back with him was a little white cat. They began to laugh at his simplicity. "A cat!" they exclaimed; "are you afraid the mice will eat up our palace?" The prince admitted that he had been rather unwise in selecting such a present for his father; and thereupon they each took their road to the city.

The elder princes rode with their princesses in open carriages, all of gold and azure. Their horses' heads were adorned with plumes of feathers and aigrettes. Nothing could be more brilliant than this cavalcade. Our young prince followed them, and behind him came the crystal rock, which everybody gazed at with wonder.

The courtiers hastened to inform the king that the three princes were coming. "Do they bring with them beautiful ladies?" asked the king. "It is impossible to find any that could surpass them," was the answer, which appeared to displease him. The two princes eagerly ascended the palace stairs with their wonderful princesses. The king received them graciously, and could not decide which deserved the prize. He looked at his youngest son, and said to him, "Have you returned alone this time?" "Your majesty will perceive in this rock a little white cat," replied the prince, "that mews so sweetly, and has such velvet paws, you will be delighted with it." The king smiled, and went to open the rock himself; but as soon as he approached it, the queen, by means of a spring, made it fly in pieces, and appeared like the sun after it had been some time hidden in the clouds. Her fair hair fell in loose ringlets over her shoulders down to her very feet; she was crowned with flowers; her gown was of thin white gauze lined with rose-coloured taffety. She rose, and made a profound courtesy to the king, who could not resist exclaiming in the excess of his admiration, "Behold the incomparable beauty who deserves the crown!"

"My liege," said she to him, "I come not to deprive you of a throne you fill so worthily. I was born the heiress to six kingdoms; permit me to offer one to you, and to give one to each of your eldest sons. I ask of you no other recompense than your friendship and this young prince for my husband. Three kingdoms will be quite enough for us." The king and all the court joined in shouts of joy and astonishment. The marriage was celebrated immediately, as well as those of the other two princes, and the court consequently passed several months in entertainments and pleasures of every

description. Finally, each couple departed to reign over their own dominions. The beautiful white cat immortalised herself in hers, as much by her goodness and liberality, as by her rare talent and beauty.

"The youthful prince was fortunate to find
Beneath a cat's skin an illustrious fair,
Worthy of adoration, and inclined
The throne, her friendship won for him, to share.

"By two enchanting eyes, on conquest bent,
The willing heart is easily subdued;
And still more power to the charm is lent,
When love's soft flame is fann'd by gratitude.

"Shall I in silence pass that parent o'er,
Who for her folly paid so dear a price;
And for some tempting fruit—as Eve before—
The welfare of her race could sacrifice?

"Mothers, beware! nor like that selfish queen,
Venture to cloud a lovely daughter's lot
To gratify some appetite as mean,
Detest such conduct: imitate it not."

# *BELLE BELLE;*

*OR,*

## *THE CHEVALIER FORTUNÉ*

ONCE upon a time, there was a very good, very mild, and very powerful king; but the Emperor Matapa, his neighbour, was still more powerful than he. They had waged great wars with one another. The emperor had gained a considerable battle in the last war; and after killing or taking prisoners the greater portion of the king's officers and soldiers, he besieged his capital city, and took it, thereby making himself master of all the treasures in it. The king had scarcely time to save himself with the queen, his sister. This princess became a widow at a very early age; she was clever and beautiful; it is true she was proud, violent, and difficult of access.

The emperor transported all the jewels and furniture belonging to the king to his own palace; he carried away an extraordinary number of soldiers, women, horses, and everything else that would be useful or agreeable to him. After he had depopulated the greater part of the kingdom, he returned triumphant to his own, where he was received by the empress and the princess, his daughter, with a thousand demonstrations of joy. In the meantime, the defeated king was not inclined to sit down patiently under his misfortunes. He called round him a few troops, and formed by degrees a small army, to increase which, as quickly as possible, he issued a proclamation, requiring all the gentlemen of his kingdom to come and serve in person, or to send one of their sons well mounted and armed, and disposed to second all his enterprises.

There lived on the frontier an old nobleman, eighty years of age, a clever and prudent man, but so ill-used by fortune, that after having possessed much wealth, he found himself reduced almost to poverty, which he would have endured patiently, had it not been shared with him by three beautiful daughters. They were so sensible, that they never murmured at their misfortunes; and if by chance they spoke of them to their father, it was more to console him than to add to his troubles.

They lived with him free from ambition under a rustic roof. When the king's proclamation reached the ears of the old man he called his daughters to him, and looking at them sorrowfully, said, "What can we do? The king orders all the distinguished people of his kingdom to join him, to fight against the emperor, or

condemns them to a very heavy fine if they fail to do so. I am not in a position to pay the tax, and am therefore in a terrible dilemma; between death and ruin!" His three daughters were as much distressed as himself, but they intreated him to have a little courage, as they felt persuaded they should find some remedy for his affliction.

The next morning the eldest daughter went to seek her father, who was walking sorrowfully in an orchard, which he attended to himself. "Sire," said she, "I am come to intreat you to permit me to set out for the army. I am of a good height, and strong enough; I will dress myself in male attire, and pass for your son; if I do not perform any heroic actions, I shall at least save you the journey, or the tax, and that is a great deal in our situation." The count embraced her affectionately, and at first objected to so extraordinary a proposition, but she told him so decidedly that she could see no other resource, that he at last consented.

There was nothing to be done now, but to provide clothes suitable to the personage she was to represent. Her father furnished her with arms, and gave her the best out of four of the horses he used to plough with. The adieus and regrets were affecting on each side. After travelling some days she passed through a meadow, bordered by a quickset hedge. She saw a shepherdess in great trouble, who was endeavouring to drag one of her sheep out of a ditch, into which it had fallen. "What are you about there, good shepherdess?" said she. "Alas!" replied the shepherdess, "I am trying to save my sheep, which is nearly drowned, and I am so weak that I have not the strength to drag it out." "I am sorry for you," said she, and without offering her any assistance rode off. The shepherdess immediately cried out, "Good-bye, disguised beauty!" The surprise of our lovely heroine is not to be expressed. "How! is it possible," said she, "that I could be so easily detected? This old shepherdess scarcely saw me for a moment, and she knows that I am disguised! Whither am I about to go, then? I shall be found out by everybody, and if by the king, what will be my shame, and his anger? He will think my father is a coward, who shrinks from danger." After much reflection, she determined that she would return home.

The count and his daughters were talking of her, and counting the days of her absence, when they saw her enter. She related to them her adventure. The good man told her that he had warned her of it, and that if she had believed him she would never have set out, because it was impossible not to discover a girl in man's clothes. All this little family was thrown into fresh embarrassment, not knowing what to do, when the second daughter, in her turn, came to seek the count. "My sister," said she, "had never been on horseback, it is not surprising that she was discovered; with respect to myself, if you will permit me to go in her place, I dare promise that you will be satisfied with me."

All the old man could say in opposition to her intention had no effect upon her; he was forced to consent to her going; she put on another dress, took other arms, and another horse. Thus equipped, she embraced her father and sisters a thousand times,

resolving to serve the king bravely: but in passing through the same meadow, where her sister had seen the shepherdess and her sheep, she perceived it at the bottom of the ditch, and the shepherdess occupied in getting it out.

"Unfortunate creature that I am," cried the old woman, "half my flock perish in this manner; if any one would but help me I could save this animal, but everybody flies from me." "How is it, shepherdess, that you take so little care of your sheep that you let them fall into the water?" said the fair cavalier, and without giving her any other consolation, she spurred her horse, and rode on. The old woman called out after her with all her might, "Good-bye, disguised beauty!" These few words distressed our amazon very much. "What a fatality," said she, "that I also should be recognised! What happened to my sister has occurred to me. I am not more fortunate than she was; and it would be ridiculous for me to join the army with so effeminate an appearance that everybody will know what I am!" She immediately returned to her father's house, much vexed at having made so unsuccessful a journey.

Her father received her affectionately, and praised her for having had the prudence to return; but that did not prevent the renewal of his grief, with the additional reason, that he had already been put to the expense of two useless suits of clothes, and several other things. The good old man, however, kept his sorrow to himself, that he might not add to that of his daughters.

At last the youngest girl begged him in the most urgent manner to grant her the same favour he had to her sisters. "Perhaps," said she, "it is presumption in me to hope I shall succeed better than they have; but, notwithstanding, I should like to try. I am taller than they are; you know that I go every day hunting; this exercise qualifies one in some degree for war; and the great desire I feel to relieve you in your distress inspires me with extraordinary courage." The count loved her much better than he did either of her sisters; she was so attentive to him that he looked upon her as his chief consolation. She read interesting stories to amuse him, nursed him in his illness, and all the game she killed was for him; so that he did all he could to change her determination, and much more so than he had done with her sisters. "Would you leave me, my dear child?" said he. "Your absence will be the death of me; if fortune should really favour you, and you should return covered with laurels, I shall not have the pleasure of witnessing them; my advanced age, and your absence, will terminate my existence." "No, my dear father," said Belle-belle (it was thus she was named); "do not think I shall be long away: the war will soon be over; and if I find any other means of fulfilling the king's orders I shall not neglect them, for I venture to assert, if my absence distress you, it will be still more distressing to me." He at last consented to her request. She made herself a very plain suit of clothes, for those of her sisters cost so much, and the poor old count's finances could not allow of much more expense; she was compelled also to take a very bad horse, because her two sisters had nearly crippled the two others; but all this did not discourage her. She embraced her father;

respectfully received his blessing; and mingling her tears with his, and those of her sisters, she departed.

In passing through the meadow I have already mentioned, she found the old shepherdess, who had not yet recovered her sheep, or was trying to pull another out of the middle of a deep ditch. "What are you doing there, shepherdess?" said Belle-belle, stopping. "I cannot do anything more, my lord," replied the shepherdess. "Ever since daylight I have been trying to save this sheep; my labour has been in vain: I am so weary, I can scarcely breathe; there is hardly a day that some new misfortune does not happen to me, and I find no one to assist me."

"I am truly sorry for you," said Belle-belle; "and to prove that I pity you, I will help you." She dismounted instantly from her horse, which was so quiet that she did not take the trouble to fasten it to anything to prevent its running away; and jumping over the hedge, after receiving a few scratches, she plunged into the ditch, and worked so well, that she succeeded in recovering the favourite sheep. "Do not cry any more, my good mother," said she to the shepherdess: "there is your sheep; and considering the long time it has been in the water, I think it is very lively."

"You have not obliged an ungrateful person," said the shepherdess. "I know you, charming Belle-belle. I know where you are going, and all your intentions. Your sisters have passed through this meadow. I knew them also, and I was not ignorant of what was passing in their minds; but they appeared so heartless, and their conduct to me was so ungracious, that I took means to interrupt their journey. The case is very different with you. I will prove it to you, Belle-belle; for I am a fairy, and take pleasure in heaping benefits upon those who deserve them. You have a miserably poor horse; I will give you one." She struck the ground as she spoke with her crook, and immediately Belle-belle heard a neighing behind a bush; she turned quickly and saw the most beautiful horse in the world: it began to run and bound about in the meadow.

Belle-belle, who was fond of horses, was delighted to see one so perfect. The fairy called this fine courser to her, and touching it with her crook, she said, "Faithful Comrade, be better harnessed than the Emperor Matapa's best horse." Instantly Comrade had on a saddle-cloth of green velvet, embroidered with pearls and rubies, a saddle to match, and a bridle of pearls, with a bit and studs of gold: in short, there was nothing to be found so magnificent. "What you see," said the fairy, "is the least thing to admire in this horse. He has many other qualities which I will detail to you. In the first place, he only eats once in eight days. You need not be at the trouble of looking after him; he knows the present, the past, and the future. I have had him a long time, and I have trained him as for myself. Whatever you wish to know, or whenever you need advice, you have but to address yourself to him; he will give you such good counsel, that sovereigns would be happy to have ministers like him; you must therefore consider him more as your friend than your horse. Lastly, your dress is not to my liking; I will give you one more becoming."

She struck the ground with her crook, and there appeared a large trunk covered with Turkey leather, studded with gold nails: Belle-belle's initials were upon it. The fairy sought amongst the grass for a golden key made in England.[1] She opened the trunk; it was lined with Spanish leather, profusely embroidered. There were twelve suits of clothes in it, twelve cravats, twelve swords, twelve feathers, and so on, everything in dozens. The coats were so covered with embroidery and diamonds, that Belle-belle could scarcely lift them. "Choose the suit that pleases you the most," said the fairy, "and the others shall follow you everywhere. You have only to stamp your foot, saying, 'Turkey-leather trunk, come to me full of linen and lace; Turkey-leather trunk, come to me full of jewels and money:' it will instantly be before you, whether you are out of doors or in your chamber. You must also assume a name, for Belle-belle will not suit the profession you are about to enter. It strikes me you might call yourself the Chevalier Fortuné. But you ought to know who I am; I shall therefore appear to you in my usual form." At the same moment her old woman's skin fell from her, and she appeared so wonderfully beautiful, that she dazzled the eyes of Belle-belle. Her dress was of blue velvet, trimmed with ermine; her hair entwined with pearls, and on her head was a superb crown.

Belle-belle, transported with admiration, threw herself at her feet, testifying by that attitude her respect and unutterable gratitude. The fairy raised her up, and embraced her affectionately. She told her to put on a suit of green and gold brocade. She obeyed her orders, and mounting her horse, continued her journey, so overwhelmed by all the extraordinary things that had just happened, that she could think of nothing else.

At length she began to ask herself, by what unlooked-for good fortune she could have attracted the kindness of so powerful a fairy, "Because really," said she, "I was not required to recover the sheep, for a simple stroke of her wand would have brought a whole flock back from the antipodes, had it gone there. It was very lucky I was so disposed to oblige her. The trifling service I did her is the cause of all she has done for me; she knew my heart, and approved of my sentiments. Ah! if my father could see me now, so magnificent and so rich, how delighted he would be! But at all events, I shall have the pleasure of sharing with my family the fortune she has given me."

As she finished making these various reflections, she arrived in a fine and very populous city. She drew all eyes upon her; they followed her and surrounded her, and every one cried out, "Was there ever seen a cavalier more handsome, better made, or more beautifully dressed? How gracefully he manages that superb horse!" They saluted him most respectfully, which he returned with a kind and courteous air. As soon as he entered the inn, the governor, who was walking, and had admired him in passing, sent a gentleman to say, that he hoped he would come and take up his lodgings

[1] A testimony to the superiority of our locksmiths, even in those days.

in his castle. The Chevalier Fortuné (for in short we must henceforth speak of Belle-belle as such) replied, that not having the honour of being known by him, he would not take that liberty; that he would go and pay his respects to him, and begged he would give him one of his people, whom he could intrust with something of consequence he wished to send to his father. The governor sent him immediately a very trusty messenger, and Fortuné desired him to come again, as his despatches were not yet ready.

He shut himself in his chamber; then, stamping with his foot, said, "Turkey-leather trunk, come to me filled with diamonds and pistoles!" It appeared that instant; but there was no key, and where was he to find it? What a pity to break a lock of enamelled gold of several colours; and moreover, was there not much to fear from the indiscretion of a locksmith? He would scarcely have spoken of the chevalier's treasures before thieves would assemble to rob him, and perhaps they might kill him.

He then looked for the key everywhere, and the more he sought it the less he could find it. "How troublesome!" cried he; "I shall not be able to make use of the fairy's bounty, nor send my father any of the property she has given me." While he was thus musing, it occurred to him, that the best thing to do would be to consult his horse; he went into the stable, and said in a whisper, "I intreat you, Comrade, tell me where I shall find the key of the Turkey-leather trunk." "In my ear," replied the horse. Fortuné looked in the horse's ear; he espied a green ribbon—he drew it out, and saw the key he wished for; he opened the Turkey-leather trunk, wherein were more diamonds and pistoles than would fill a bushel. The chevalier filled three caskets—one for his father, and two others for his sisters; he then gave them to the man the governor had sent to him, and begged him not to stop, either night or day, until he arrived at the count's house.

This messenger made the greatest speed, and when he told the old man that he came from his son, the chevalier, and that he had brought him a very heavy casket, he wondered what could be in it; for he had started with so little money, that he did not think he was in a condition to buy anything, nor even to pay the journey of the man who had charge of his present. He first of all opened his letter, and when he had read all that his dear daughter had written, he thought he should die with joy; the sight of the jewels and gold still further confirmed the truth of the story; the most extraordinary thing was, that when Belle-belle's two sisters opened their caskets, they found bits of glass instead of diamonds, and false pistoles—the fairy not choosing that they should partake of her kindness; they therefore thought their sister was laughing at them, and they felt extremely vexed at her; but the count, perceiving how angry they were with her, gave them the greater part of the jewels he had just received. As soon as they touched them they changed like the others; they concluded, therefore, that an unknown power was working against them, and begged their father to keep the remainder for himself. The handsome Fortuné did not wait the return of his messenger before he quitted the city—his business was too

urgent; he was bound to obey the king's orders. He paid his visit to the governor, at whose house all the people had assembled to see him. There was in his person and all his actions such an air of goodness, that they could but admire and love him. He said nothing but what was pleasant to hear; and the crowd was so great around him, he did not know how to account for so extraordinary a circumstance; for, having lived always in the country, he had seen very few people.

He continued his journey on his excellent horse, which amused him with a thousand stories, or by recounting to him the most remarkable events in ancient and modern history. "My dear master," said he, "I am delighted to be your property. I know you possess much frankness and honour. I am disgusted with certain people with whom I have lived a long time, and who made me weary of my life, their society was so insupportable. Among them was a man who professed great friendship for me, who ranked me above Pegasus and Bucephalus when he spoke in my presence; but as soon as I was out of sight, he treated me as a jaded and sorry horse; he affected an admiration of my faults, in order to induce me to commit greater. It is true, that one day, being tired of his caresses, which properly speaking were treacheries, I gave him so severe a kick, that I had the pleasure of knocking out nearly all his teeth; and I have never seen him since, that I do not tell him with great sincerity, it is not right that a mouth that is opened so often to abuse those who do you no harm, should be as handsome as others." "Ho! ho!" cried the chevalier; "thou art very mettlesome; dost thou not fear that this man will some day in a passion pass his sword through your body?" "It would not signify, my lord," replied Comrade; "besides, I should know his intention as soon as he could form it."

They were thus talking when they approached an extensive forest. Comrade said to the chevalier, "Master, there is a man who lives here that may perhaps be of great service to us; he is a woodcutter, and one who has been gifted." "What dost thou mean by that term?" interrupted Fortuné. "Gifted means, that he has received one or more gifts from fairies," added the horse; "you must engage him to go with us." At the same time, advancing to where the woodcutter was at work, the young chevalier accosted him with a gentle and winning air, and asked him several questions about the place they were in; whether there were any wild beasts in the forest, and if he would be permitted to hunt in it. The woodcutter replied to everything like an intelligent man. Fortuné then inquired, where the men were gone, who had been helping him to fell so many trees. The woodcutter replied that he had felled them all by himself, that it had been the work of a few hours, and that he must cut down many others to make a load for himself. "What! Do you pretend you will carry all this wood to-day?" said the chevalier. "Oh, my lord," replied Strongback[1] (for thus people called him), "my

[1] Forte-échine, literally "strong chine." I have translated the names of the seven gifted servants: Forte-échine, Léger, le bon Tireur, Fine-oreille, l'Impétueux, Trinquet and Grugeon, as they are supposed to be nicknames bestowed upon them by the people of the country, and not their proper appellations.

strength is extraordinary." "You make a great deal of money, then?" said Fortuné. "Very little," replied the woodcutter, "for they are poor in this place; here every one works for himself, without begging his neighbour's assistance." "Since you live in so poor a country," added the chevalier, "you have only to choose, to go to another. Come with me, you shall not want for anything, and when you would wish to return, I will give you money for your journey." The woodcutter thought he could not do better; he forsook his axe and followed his new master. As soon as they had passed through the forest, they saw a man in the plain, who appeared to be tying his legs together with some ribbon so closely, that he would scarcely be able to walk. Comrade stopped, and said to his master, "My lord, here is another gifted man: you will want him; you must take him with you." Fortuné drew near him, and with his usual grace, asked him, "Why he was thus tying his legs?" "I am going to hunt," said he. "How?" said the chevalier smiling. "Do you mean to say you can run better when you are thus fettered?" "No, my lord," replied he, "I am aware that my speed will not be so great, but that is my object; for there is not a stag, roebuck, or hare, that I do not outrun when my legs are at liberty, so that by leaving them continually behind me they escape, and I scarcely ever have the pleasure of catching them!" "You seem an extraordinary man," said Fortuné; "what is your name?" "They have given me the name of Swift," said the hunter, "and I am well known in this country." "If you would like to see another," added the chevalier, "I should be very happy for you to go with me; you will not have so much fatigue, and I will treat you well." Swift was not particularly well off, so he willingly accepted the offer proposed to him; and Fortuné, followed by his new servants, continued his journey.

The next morning he saw a man on the border of a marsh, binding his eyes. The horse said to his master, "My lord, I advise you to take this man also into your service." Fortuné immediately asked him, why he bound his eyes. "I see too clearly," said he; "I spy the game more than four leagues off, and I never shoot without killing more than I wish. I am therefore obliged to bind my eyes; for, though I got but a glimpse, there would be neither partridges nor any other little birds left in the country in less than two hours." "You are very clever," replied Fortuné. "They call me the Goodmarksman," said the man; "and I would not leave this occupation for anything in the world." "I have, notwithstanding, a great inclination to propose to you to travel with me," said the chevalier; "it will not prevent your exercising your talent." The Goodmarksman made some objections, and the chevalier had more difficulty in winning him over than with the others; for sportsmen are generally fond of liberty. However, he at length succeeded, and left the marsh in which he had halted with his additional attendant.

Some days after this, he passed by a meadow, in which he saw a man lying on his side. Comrade said, "Master, this man is gifted; I foresee that he will be very necessary to you." Fortuné entered the meadow, and desired to know what he was doing. "I want some simples," replied he; "and I am listening to the grass as it grows, to find out

those which I require." "How!" said the chevalier, "have you ears so quick, that you can hear the grass grow, and guess that which will come up?" "It is for that reason," said the listener, "they call me Fine-ear." "Very well, Fine-ear," continued Fortuné, "are you inclined to follow me? I will give you such high wages, that you will have no reason to regret it." The man, delighted at so agreeable a proposition, joined without hesitation the other followers.

The chevalier, continuing his journey, saw by the side of a high-road a man whose cheeks were so inflated that it had a very droll effect; he was standing with his face towards a lofty mountain, two leagues off, upon which were fifty or sixty windmills. The horse said to his master, "There is another of our gifted ones; do all you can to take him with you." Fortuné, who had the power of fascinating every one he saw or spoke to, accosted this man, and asked him, what he was doing there. "I am blowing a little, my lord," said he, "to set all those mills at work." "It appears to me, you are too far off," replied the chevalier. "On the contrary," replied the blower, "I find I am too near; and if I did not retain the half of my breath, I should upset the mills, and perhaps the mountains they stand on. I do a great deal of mischief in this way without intending, it; and I can tell you, my lord, that, having been very ill-treated once by my mistress as I went into the woods to indulge my sorrow, my sighs tore the trees up by the root, and created great confusion; so that in this province they never call me anything but Boisterous." "If they are tired of you," said Fortuné, "and you would come with me, here are some who will keep you company; they also possess extraordinary talent." "I have so natural a curiosity for everything that is uncommon," replied Boisterous, "that I accept your offer."

Fortuné, much pleased, proceeded; and, after passing through a well-wooded country, came to a large lake, fed by several springs; at the side of it was a man, who looked at it very attentively. "My lord," said Comrade to his master, "this man is wanting to complete your train. If you could induce him to follow you, it would be as well." The chevalier approached him immediately. "Will you tell me," said he, "what you are doing there?" "My lord," replied the man, "you shall see as soon as this lake is full; I shall drink it at one draught, for I am still thirsty, although I have already twice emptied it." And accordingly he stooped down, and in a few minutes left scarcely sufficient water for the smallest fish to swim in. Fortuné was not more surprised than all his followers. "What!" said he, "are you always so thirsty?" "No," said Tippler; "I only drink like this when I have eaten anything too salt, or in case of some wager. I have been known for some time past by the name of the Tippler." "Come with me, Tippler," said the knight; "I will give you wine to tipple, which you will find better than spring-water." This promise pleased the man very much, and he forthwith took service with the others.

The chevalier had now arrived within sight of the place fixed on for the general rendezvous of the king's forces, when he perceived a man eating so greedily, that,

although he had more than sixty thousand loaves of Gonesse bread[1] before him, he seemed resolved not to leave the smallest morsel of it. Comrade said to his master, "My lord, you want but this man; pray make him come with you." The chevalier accosted him, and, smiling, said to him, "Are you determined to eat all this bread for your breakfast?" "Yes," replied he: "all I regret is, that there is so little; but the bakers are arrant lazy fellows, and give themselves very little trouble, whether you are hungry or not." "If you require so much every day," added Fortuné, "there is hardly a country you would not put in a state of starvation." "Oh! my lord," replied Eater (as the people called him), "I should be very sorry to have always so great an appetite; neither my property nor that of my neighbours would be sufficient to satisfy it. It is true that now and then I take a fancy to feast in this fashion." "My friend Eater," said Fortuné, "follow me; I will give you good cheer, and you will not be dissatisfied with having chosen me for a master."

Comrade, who wanted neither for sense nor forethought, warned the chevalier to forbid all these people from boasting of the extraordinary gifts which they possessed. He lost no time in calling them to him, and said, "Listen to me, Strongback, Swift, Goodmarksman, Fine-ear, Boisterous, Tippler, and Eater. I give you notice, that, if you would please me, you will keep as an inviolable secret the talents you possess; and I assure you I shall endeavour to make you so happy, that you will be perfectly satisfied." Each bound himself by an oath to obey his orders implicitly; and, soon after, the chevalier, more adorned by his beauty and his graceful demeanour than by his magnificent dress, entered the capital city, mounted upon his excellent horse, and followed by the finest serving-men in the world. He lost no time in procuring liveries for them, laced all over with gold and silver; he gave them horses: and, having taken apartments in the best inn, he awaited the day fixed for the review. Nothing, however, was talked of but him in the city; and the king, prepossessed in his favour by the general rumour, was very anxious to see him.

[1] Gonesse is a little village in the neighbourhood of Paris, which was celebrated for its very white and delicate bread. During the wars of the Fronde, the pain de Gonesse was the luxury the deprivation of which was most regretted by the Parisians. Guy Patin, writing to his friend Spon at that period, when the Prince de Condé had cut off the supplies of the city by taking possession of the principal entrances to it, says, "Corbeil is of importance to us. It will be the first town we shall try to take. After that Lagny; after that we must take St. Denys, in order to get le pain de Gonesse for those who have delicate stomach, and have been accustomed to it." Gonesse formed a portion of the ancient county of Paris, and was united with the domains of the crown by Hugh Capet. Even in that early period, it was famed for its granaries. The principal inhabitants of the village were bound to watch "the King's Grange," by turns, every night during the month of August; but this service being construed into a species of serfdom which prevented them from marrying free women, they petitioned Louis IX., who affranchised them. The great king, Phillippe Auguste, was born in this village, and was in consequence sometimes called De Gonesse; and Francis I., writing to Charles V. during their quarrels, styled himself ironically, "Par la grace de Dieu, Roi de France; et premier citoyen de Gonesse et de Vanves." So much wealth was amassed by the bakers of Gonesse, that marble monuments were frequently raised to the memory of the men as well as the masters; but very little bread has been made there during the present century, and what is still so called comes mostly from the Faubourgs of St. Denis and St. Martin. I trust the details of this note are sufficiently curious to excuse the length of it.

All the troops assembled in a great plain. The king came there, with the queen his sister, and all their court. The queen abated no jot of her pomp, notwithstanding the misfortunes of the kingdom; and Fortuné was dazzled by so much splendour. But if they attracted his attention, their observation was equally drawn towards his incomparable beauty. Every one was asking, who that handsome and graceful young gentleman could be; and the king, passing close by him, made him a sign to approach.

Fortuné instantly alighted from his horse to make the king a low bow; he could not help blushing at being looked at so earnestly; this additional colour heightened the brilliancy of his complexion. "I should be glad," said the king, "to learn from yourself who you are, and what is your name?" "Sire," replied he, "I call myself Fortuné, without having, up to the present moment, any reason for bearing this name; for my father, who is a count of the frontier, passes his life in great poverty, although he was born of a rich and noble family." "Fortuné, who has been your godmother," replied the king, "has not done so badly for you in bringing you hither; I feel a particular affection for you, and I remember that your father rendered mine great service. I will reward him by my favour to his son." "That is quite just, brother," said the queen, who had not yet spoken; "and as I am your elder, and know more particularly than you do all the service that the count of the frontier has rendered the state, I beg you will intrust to me the care of rewarding this young chevalier."

Fortuné, enchanted at his reception, could not sufficiently thank the king and queen; he did not, however, venture to enlarge greatly upon his feeling of gratitude, believing it to be more respectful to be silent, than to talk too much. The little he did say was so correct, and so much to the purpose, that every one applauded him. He afterwards remounted his horse, and mixed among the noblemen, who accompanied the king; but the queen called him away every minute, to ask him a thousand questions, and, turning herself towards Floride, who was her favourite confidante, said to her softly, "What dost thou think of this chevalier? Could any one display a more noble air, or more regular features? I own to thee I never saw anything more charming." Floride quite agreed with the queen, adding much encomium upon him, for the chevalier was no less charming to her than to her mistress.

Fortuné could not help fixing his eyes from time to time upon the king. He was the handsomest prince in the world, and his manners were most fascinating. Belle-belle, who had not renounced her sex with her dress, felt a sincere attachment for him.

The king told Fortuné, after the review, that he feared the war would be a very sanguinary one, and that he had determined to keep him close to his own person. The queen, who was present, exclaimed, "She had also been thinking the same thing, that he ought not to be exposed to a long campaign, that the place of premier maître d'hôtel was vacant in her household, and that she would give it to him." "No," said the king, "I shall make him grand equerry to myself." They thus disputed one with the other for the pleasure of advancing Fortuné, and the queen, afraid of making known the

secret emotions that were already agitating her heart, acceded to the king the gratification of appropriating the services of the chevalier.

Hardly a day passed that he did not call for his Turkey-leather trunk, and take out a new dress. He was certainly the most magnificent prince at court, insomuch that the queen asked him sometimes by what means his father could be at such an expense for him; at other times she would banter him, "Own the truth," she said, "you have a mistress; it is she who sends you all the beautiful things we see." Fortuné blushed, and respectfully replied to all the various questions the queen put to him.

On the other hand, he acquitted himself of his duties admirably. Sensibly alive to the king's merits, he attached himself more to him than he wished to do. "What is my fate?" said he, "I love a great king, without any hope of his loving me, or that he will ever know what I suffer." The king, on his part, loaded him with favours; nothing was well done that was not done by the handsome chevalier. The queen, deceived by his dress, seriously thought of the means of contracting a secret marriage with him. The inequality of their birth was the only thing which troubled her.

She was not the only one entertaining such feelings for Fortuné; the handsomest women of the court were taken with him. He was overwhelmed with tender epistles, with assignations, with presents, and a thousand gallantries, to all of which he replied with so much indifference, that they doubted not he had a mistress in his own country. It was in vain that, at the great entertainments of the court, he took no pains to distinguish himself. He carried away the prize at all the tournaments; in hunting, he killed more game than any one else, he danced at all the balls with more grace and skill than any of the courtiers; in short, it was delightful to see or to hear him.

The queen, anxious to be spared the confusion of declaring her sentiments to him herself, desired Floride to make him understand, that so many marks of kindness from a young and beautiful queen ought not to be a matter of indifference to him. Floride was very much embarrassed by this commission, for she had been unable to avoid the fate of all who had seen the chevalier, and she thought it would be too amiable on her part to prefer her mistress's interests to her own; so that, at each opportunity the queen gave her of talking to him, instead of speaking of the beauty and great qualifications of that princess, she told him only of her ill-humour, and of what her women endured from her; of the injustice she did them, of the bad use she made of the power she usurped in the kingdom; and, finally, drawing a comparison between their sentiments, she said, "I am not born a queen, but really I ought to have been one. I have so much generosity in my nature, that I am anxious to do good to everybody. Ah! if I were in that high station," continued she, "how happy would I make the handsome Fortuné. He would love me out of gratitude, if he could not love me from inclination."

The young chevalier was quite dismayed at this conversation, and knew not what to answer, and therefore carefully avoided these tête à-têtes with her; and the impatient queen never failed to ask her, what impression she had made for her upon Fortuné.

"He thinks so little of himself," said she, "and is so bashful, that he will not believe anything I tell him of you, or he pretends not to believe it, because he is preoccupied by some other passion." "I believe so too," said the alarmed queen; "but is it possible he will not yield to his ambition?" "And is it possible," replied Floride, "that you would owe his heart to your crown? So young and beautiful as you are, possessing a thousand attractions; is it necessary to have recourse to the splendour of a diadem?" "One has recourse to everything," replied the queen, "when it is to subdue a rebellious heart."

Floride saw clearly that it was impossible to cure her mistress of her infatuation for him. The queen each day expected some happy result from the labours of her confidante, but she made so little progress with Fortuné, that she was at length compelled to seek the means of obtaining a personal interview with him. She knew that he was accustomed very early every morning to walk in a little wood in front of the windows of her apartment. She arose at daybreak, and, watching the path he was likely to take, saw him approaching with a melancholy and abstracted air. She instantly called Floride. "Thou hast spoken too truly," said she; "Fortuné is without doubt in love with some lady in this court, or in his own country—see how sad he looks." "I have observed this sadness in all his conversations," replied Floride; "and if it were possible for you to forget him, you would do well." "It is too late," exclaimed the queen sighing deeply; but, as he has entered that green arbour, let us go there; I will have thee only to follow me." The girl did not dare to stop the queen, however much she wished to do so; for she feared she would induce Fortuné to fall in love with her, and a rival of such exalted rank is always very dangerous. As soon as the queen had taken a few steps in the wood, she heard the chevalier singing; his voice was very sweet; he had composed these words to a new air:—

"How rare a thing it is for love and peace
To dwell together in the same fond heart!
For ever with my joys, my fears increase,
To see them, like a morning dream, depart!
Dread of the future robs my soul of rest,
Then most unhappy when it most is blest!"

Fortuné had made these verses in consequence of his sentiments for the king, the favour he had shown him, and from the fear he was in of being recognised, and forced to leave a court he preferred living in to any other in the world. The queen, who stopped to listen, was extremely distressed. "What am I going to attempt?" said she softly to Floride. "This ungrateful young man despises the honour of pleasing me: he thinks himself happy—he seems satisfied with his conquest—and he sacrifices me to another." "He is at that age," replied Floride, "when reason has not yet established its rights; if I dared advise your majesty, it would be to forget a giddy little fellow, who is not capable of appreciating his good fortune." The queen would much rather her confidante had spoken to her in a different manner; she cast an angry look at her, and,

hastily advancing, she quickly entered the arbour where the knight was; she pretended to be surprised to find him there, and to be vexed at his seeing her in déshabille, although she had taken great pains to make herself magnificent and attractive.

As soon as she appeared, from respect to her, he would have retired, but she desired him to remain, that he might assist her in walking. "I was awoke this morning, most agreeably, by the singing of the birds. The fine weather, and the pure air, invited me to hear their warbling nearer. How happy they are; alas! they know nought but pleasure: grief does not trouble them!" "It appears to me, madam," replied Fortuné, "that they are not entirely exempt from pain and sorrow; they are always in danger of the murderous shot, or the deceitful snares of sportsmen, besides the birds of prey which war against these little innocent ones. When a hard winter comes, and freezes the ground, and covers it with snow, they die for want of hemp or millet-seed, and every year they have the trouble of seeking a fresh mistress."

"You think, then, chevalier," said the queen smiling, "that is a trouble? There are men who have a fresh one each month in the year; but you appear surprised at it," she continued, "as if your heart was not of the same stamp, and that you have not yet been given to change!" "I am not able, madam, to know of what I should be guilty," said the chevalier, "for I have never yet loved; but I dare believe, if I had an attachment, it would end but with my life." "You have never loved?" cried the queen, looking so earnestly at him that the poor chevalier changed colour several times; "you have never been in love? Fortuné, can you assert this to a queen, who reads in your face and your eyes the passion that occupies your heart? and who has heard the words which you sang to the new air, which is just now so popular." "It is true, madam," replied the chevalier, "that those lines are my own; but it is likewise true that I made them without any particular design; my friends ask me every day to write drinking-songs for them, although I never drink anything but water; there are others who prefer love-songs: thus I sing of love, and of Bacchus, without being a lover or a drinker."

The queen listened to him with so much emotion that she could scarcely support herself; that which he had told her rekindled the hope in her bosom that Floride would have deprived her of. "If I could think you sincere," said she, "I should indeed be surprised that you have not seen a lady in this court sufficiently lovely for you to fix upon." "Madam," replied Fortuné, "I endeavour so earnestly to fulfil the duties of my office, that I have no time for sighing." "You love nothing, then?" added she, with vehemence. "No, madam," said he; "I have not a heart of so gallant a character; I am a kind of misanthrope, who loves his liberty, and who would not lose it for all the world." The queen sat down, and fixing upon him the kindest of looks, "There are some chains so beautiful and glorious," replied she, "that any one might feel happy to wear them; if fortune has destined such to you, I would advise you to renounce your liberty." In speaking thus her eyes explained her meaning too intelligibly, for the chevalier, who had already very strong suspicions, not to be now entirely confirmed in

them. Fearing the conversation might go still further, he looked at his watch, and setting the hand on a little—"I must beg your majesty," said he, "to allow me to go to the palace; it is time for the king to arise, and he desired me to be in attendance.' "Go, indifferent youth," said she sighing profoundly; you are right to pay court to my brother, but remember you would not have done wrong to dedicate some of your attentions to me."

The queen followed him with her eyes, then let them fall, and reflecting upon what had just passed, blushed with shame and rage. That which added still more to her grief, was that Floride had witnessed it all, and she remarked upon her face an expression of joy, which seemed to tell her she would have done better had she taken her advice instead of speaking to Fortuné; she meditated some time, and taking her tablets, she wrote these lines, which she caused to be set to music by the Lully[1] of the court:—

"Behold! behold! the torment I endure!
The victor knows it: but it moves him not.
My heart displays the wound no time can cure,
Still rankling with the shaft too truly shot.

"As unconceal'd, his coldnes, his disdain,
He hates me, and his hate I would return;
But ah! my foolish heart essays in vain
With aught but fondest love for him to burn!"

Floride played her part very well with the queen; she consoled her as much as she could, and gave her some few flattering hopes, which she needed to support her. "Fortuné thinks himself so beneath you, madam," said she, "that he did not perhaps understand what you meant; and it appears to me that he has already said much in assuring you that he loves no one." It is so natural for us to flatter ourselves, that the queen at length took heart a little. She was ignorant that the malicious Floride, aware of the chevalier's indifference for her, wished to induce him to speak still more explicitly that he might offend her by his cool answers.

He was, on his part, in the greatest perplexity. His situation appeared cruel to him; he would not have hesitated to leave the court, if his love for the king had not detained him in spite of himself. He never went near the queen but when she held her court, and then always in the king's suite: she perceived this alteration in his conduct instantly; she several times gave him the opportunity of paying attentions to her, without his profiting by it; but one day, as she descended into her gardens, she saw him cross one of the grand avenues, and suddenly enter the little wood. She called to him, he feared to displease her in pretending not to hear her, and approached her respectfully.

"Do you remember, chevalier," said she, "the conversation we had together some time ago in the green arbour?" "I am not capable, madam," answered he, "of forgetting that honour." "No doubt the questions I put to you then," said the queen, "were distressing; for since that day you have not placed yourself in a situation for me

[1] The celebrated composer, Lully, was, at the time these stories were written, in the zenith of his popularity; both at the Court of Versailles, and with the public at large. He died in 1686.

to ask you any more." "As chance alone procured me that favour," said he, "I thought it would be presuming to seek any other." "Rather say, ungrateful man," continued she blushing, "that you have avoided my presence; you know too well my sentiments." Fortuné cast down his eyes in an embarrassed and modest manner, and as he hesitated to reply to her, she continued, "You seem very much disconcerted—go, do not endeavour to answer me; I understand you better than though I heard you speak." She would perhaps have said more, but she perceived the king coming that way. She advanced towards him, and seeing him look very melancholy, she begged him to tell her the reason. "You know," said the king, "that about a month ago tidings were brought me that a dragon of prodigious size was ravaging the country. I thought they could kill him, and issued for that purpose the necessary orders; but they have tried every means in vain. He devours my subjects, their flocks, and all that he meets with; he poisons all the rivers and springs wherever he quenches his thirst, and withers the grass and the herbs that he lies down upon." While the king was talking to her, it entered the mind of the irritated queen that there was an opportunity afforded to her of sacrificing the chevalier to her resentment. "I am not ignorant." said she, "of the bad news you have received. Fortuné, whom you saw with me, has just given me an account of it; but, brother, you will be surprised at what I have to tell you; he has intreated me, with the greatest importunity, to ask you to permit him to go and fight this terrible dragon; he is indeed so skilled in the use of arms, that I am not surprised he presumes so much; besides, he has told me he has a secret, by which he can put the most wakeful dragon to sleep, but that must not be mentioned, because it does not show much courage in the action." "In whatever manner he may do it," replied the king, "it will be very glorious for him, and of great service to us, if he could succeed; but I fear this proceeds from an indiscreet zeal, and that it will cost him his life." "No, brother," added the queen, "fear not; he has related very surprising things on this subject. You know that he is naturally very sincere, and then what honour can he hope for in dying so rashly. In short," said she, "I have promised to obtain for him what he so much desires, that if you refuse him it will kill him."

"I consent to what you wish," said the king, "but I own to you, not without much repugnance: but let us call him." He then made a sign for Fortuné to approach, and said kindly to him, "I have just learnt from the queen the desire you have to fight the dragon that is devastating our country. It is so bold a resolution, that I can scarcely believe you have considered all the danger." "I have represented this to him," said the queen; "but he is so zealous in your service, and so desirous to signalise himself, that nothing can dissuade him from it; and I foresee that he will be successful." Fortuné was much surprised at what the king and queen said to him. He had sense enough to penetrate the wicked intentions of this princess, but his timidity would not permit him to explain it; and, without answering, he let her continue to talk, contenting himself with making low bows, so that the king imagined he was renewing his intreaties to

grant him what he so much desired. "Go, then," said he, sighing, "go where glory calls you. I know you are so skilful in all you do, and more particularly in the use of weapons, that, perhaps this monster will have much difficulty in avoiding your blows." "Sire," replied the chevalier, "whatever may be the issue of this combat, I shall be satisfied; I shall deliver you from a terrible scourge, or I shall die for you; but honour me with one favour, which will be infinitely dear to me." "Ask for whatever you wish," said the king. "I am bold enough," continued Fortuné, "to ask for your portrait." The king was much pleased he should think of his portrait at a time when he might have been occupied with other things, and the queen was grieved afresh, that he had not made the same request of her, but he must have had a superabundance of goodnature, to wish for the portrait of so wicked a woman.

The king returned to his palace, and the queen to hers. Fortuné, much embarrassed by the promise he had made, went to seek his horse, and said, "My dear Comrade, there is a great deal of news for you." "I know it already, my lord," replied he. "What shall we do then?" added Fortuné. "We must set off directly," said the horse; "get the king's order, by which he desires you to go and fight the dragon, we will then do our duty." These few words consoled our young chevalier; he failed not the next morning to wait on the king, in a riding-dress, as handsome as the others that he had taken from the Turkey-leather trunk.

As soon as the king saw him, he exclaimed, "What! you are ready to go?" "Your commands cannot be too quickly executed, sire," replied he; "I come to take my leave of your majesty." The king could not help relenting, seeing so young, so handsome, so accomplished a gentleman, upon the eve of exposing himself to the greatest danger man could ever place himself in.

He embraced him, and gave him his portrait surrounded by large diamonds. Fortuné received it with extraordinary joy, for the king's noble qualities had made such an impression on him that he could not imagine anything in the world more charming; and if he suffered at leaving him, it was much less from the fear of being devoured by the dragon, than from being deprived of the presence of one so dear to him.

The king would have a general order included in Fortuné's commission, for all his subjects to aid and assist him whenever he should stand in need; after which he took leave of the king, and that nothing might be remarked in his behaviour, he went to the queen, who was sitting at her toilet, surrounded by several of her ladies. She changed colour when he appeared; what had she not to reproach herself with on his account? He saluted her respectfully, and asked her, if she would honour him with her commands, as he was on the point of departing. These last words completely disconcerted her; and Floride, who knew not what the queen had plotted against the chevalier, was thunderstruck. She would willingly have had some private conversation with him, but he avoided carefully so embarrassing an interview.

"I pray the gods," said the queen, "that you may conquer, and return triumphant."

"Madam," replied the chevalier, "your majesty does me too much honour, and is sufficiently aware of the danger to which I shall be exposed; however, I am full of confidence—perhaps, upon this occasion, I am the only one who does hope." The queen understood very well what he meant; no doubt she would have replied to this reproach, had there been fewer persons present.

The chevalier returned to his lodgings, and ordered his seven excellent servants to take horse, and follow him, as the time had arrived to prove what they could do. There was not one who did not rejoice at being able to serve him. In less than an hour everything was ready, and they set out with him, assuring him they would do their utmost to fulfil his command. In short, as soon as they had reached the open country, and had no fear of being seen, each one gave proof of his address. Tippler drank the water from the lakes, and caught the finest fish for his master's dinner. Swift, on his part, hunted the stags, and caught the hares by their ears, whatever doubles they made. The Goodmarksman gave no quarter to either partridges or pheasants; and when the game was killed by one party, the venison by another, and the fish taken out of the water, Strongback carried it all cheerfully. Even Fine-ear made himself useful: he found truffles, morelles, mushrooms, salads, and fine herbs, by hearing them grow in the ground. So Fortuné hardly ever had occasion to draw his purse-strings to defray the expenses of his journey. He would have been very much amused at the sight of so many extraordinary things, if his heart had not been so full of all that he had just left. The king's merit was ever present to him, and the queen's malice appeared to him so great, that he could not help hating her. He was riding along lost in thought, when he was aroused from his reverie by the piercing cries of several people. They were those of the poor peasants, whom the dragon was devouring. He saw some, who having escaped, were running away with all their might. He called to them, but they would not stop; he followed, and spoke to them, and he learnt from them that the monster was not far off. He asked them, how they had managed to escape; they told him that water was very scarce in the country, that they had only rain-water to drink, to preserve which, they had made a pond—that the dragon, after going his rounds, went to drink there—that he uttered such tremendous yells when he arrived at it, he might be heard a league off, and that then everybody was so alarmed that they hid themselves, and fastened their doors and windows.

The chevalier entered an inn, not so much to rest himself, as to get some good advice from his pretty horse. When every one had retired, he went into the stable, and said, "Comrade, how shall we conquer this dragon?" "My lord," said he, "I will dream of it to-night, and tell you what I think about it to-morrow morning." Accordingly, the next morning when the chevalier came again, the horse said, "Let Fine-ear listen if the dragon is near at hand." Fine-ear laid himself down on the ground, and heard the yells of the dragon, who was about seven leagues off. When the horse was informed of this, he said to Fortuné, "Desire Tippler to go and drink up all the water

out of the great pond, and make Strongback carry wine enough there to fill it. You must put around the pond dried raisins, pepper, and several things that will make the dragon thirsty; order all the inhabitants to shut themselves up in their houses; and you, my lord, must not leave the one you may choose to lay wait in with your attendants. The dragon will not fail to go and drink at the pond, the wine he will like very much, and you will then see what will be the end of it all.

As soon as Comrade had arranged what was to be done, everybody set about what they had to do. The chevalier went into a house which overlooked the pond. He had scarcely done so, when the frightful dragon came and drank a little, then he ate some of the breakfast they had prepared for him, and then he drank more and more, till he became quite intoxicated. He was unable to move, he lay upon his side, his head hanging down, and his eyes closed. When Fortuné saw him in this state, he felt he had not a moment to lose, he issued forth, sword in hand, and attacked him most courageously. The dragon, finding himself wounded on all sides, would have got up and fallen upon the chevalier, but he had not the strength, he had lost so much blood. The chevalier, overjoyed that he had reduced him to this extremity, called his attendants to bind the monster with cords and chains, that the king might have the pleasure and glory of ending his life; so that, having nothing more to fear from the beast, they dragged him into the city.

Fortuné marched at the head of his little troop. On approaching the palace, he sent Swift to the king with good news of his great success; but it seemed incredible, till they actually saw the monster fast bound upon a machine constructed for the purpose.

The king descended, and embraced Fortuné. "The gods have reserved this victory for you," said he, "and I feel much less joy at the sight of this horrible dragon reduced to this condition, than at your safe return, my dear chevalier." "Sire," replied he, "may it please your majesty to give the monster his death-blow; I brought him here to receive it at your hand." The king drew his sword, and terminated the existence of one of his most cruel enemies. Everybody uttered shouts of joy at such unhoped-for success.

Floride, who had been in continual anxiety, was not long before she heard of the return of her handsome chevalier. She ran to tell the queen of it, who was so astonished and confounded by her love and her hatred, that she could return no answer to what her confidante told her; and she reproached herself a hundred and a hundred times for the malicious trick she had played him, but she would rather have seen him dead than so indifferent to her. She knew not whether to be pleased or sorry that he had returned to the court, where his presence would again disturb her peace.

The king, impatient to impart to his sister the success of such an extraordinary event, entered her chamber, leaning on the chevalier's arm. "Here is the conqueror of the dragon," said he, "who has rendered me the greatest service I could have received from a faithful subject; it was to you, madam, he first expressed his desire to

fight this monster; I hope you will appreciate the courage with which he exposed himself to the greatest danger." The queen, composing her countenance, honoured Fortuné with a gracious reception, and a thousand praises; she thought him handsomer than when he went away, and her earnest look at him was to make him understand that her heart was not cured of its wound.

She would not trust to her eyes alone the task of explanation; and one day that she was hunting with the king, she gave up following the hounds on the plea of sudden indisposition; then, turning to the young chevalier, who was near her, "You will do me the pleasure," said she, "of remaining with me; I wish to alight, and rest a little while. Go," she continued to those who accompanied her, "do not leave my brother!" She alighted instantly with Floride, and seated herself by the side of a stream, where she remained for some time in profound silence, thinking how she could best commence the conversation.

At length, raising her eyes, she fixed them upon the chevalier, and said, "As good intentions are not always obvious, I fear you have not been able to penetrate the motives which induced me to press the king to send you to fight the dragon; I felt sure from a presentiment that never deceives me that you would acquit yourself like a brave man; and your enemies thought so lightly of your courage, because you did not go to the army, that it was necessary you should perform some such action to stop their mouths. I should have informed you of what they said upon this subject," continued she, "and ought perhaps to have done so, but I feared the consequences which might result from your resentment, and thought it would be better for you to silence such ill-intentioned people by your intrepid conduct in danger, than by the exertion of an influence which would rather mark the favourite than the soldier. You perceive now, chevalier," added she, "that I took a lively interest in all that could conduce to our glory, and that you would be very wrong were you to judge otherwise." "The distance is so great between us, madam," replied he modestly, "that I am not worthy of the explanation you have been so good as to give me, nor the care you took to imperil my life for the sake of my honour. The gods protected me with more beneficence than my enemies hoped for, and I shall esteem myself always happy to employ in the king's service, or in yours, a life, the loss of which is a matter of more indifference to me than may be imagined." This respectful reproach from Fortuné perplexed the queen: she perfectly comprehended the meaning of his words: but he was still too agreeable to her to be got rid of entirely by too sharp a reply; on the contrary, she pretended to enter completely into his feelings, and made him again relate to her how skilfully he had conquered the dragon.

Fortuné had taken good care not to tell any one it was through the assistance of his attendants he had done so; he boasted of having faced this redoubtable enemy alone, and that his own skill, and his courage, even to rashness, had secured his victory; but the queen, scarcely thinking of what he was saying to her, interrupted him, to ask him

if he was now convinced of the interest she felt in all that related to him; and would have pressed the subject further upon him, when he said: "Madam, I hear the sound of the horn, the king is approaching; will your majesty mount your horse to go and meet him?" "No," said she spitefully; "it is sufficient for you to do so." "The king would blame me, madam," added he, "should I leave you by yourself in a place exposed to danger." "I will dispense with your attention," replied she, in an imperative tone. "Begone! Your presence annoys me!"

At this command, the chevalier made her a profound bow, mounted his horse, and disappeared from her sight, very uneasy at what might be the result of this fresh offence. He thereupon consulted his fine horse—"Let me know, Comrade," said he, "if this too loving, too angry queen, will find another monster to give me up to?" "No other but herself," replied the pretty horse; "but she is more of a dragon than the one you have killed, and will sufficiently put your patience and your virtue to the test." "Will she not cause me the loss of the king's favour?" cried he; "that is all I fear." "I will not reveal the future to you," said Comrade; "you must be satisfied that I am always on the watch." He said no more, for the king appeared at the end of an avenue. Fortuné joined him, and told him the queen was not well, and had commanded him to stay near her. "It appears to me," said the king smiling, "you are very much in her good graces, and that it is to her you speak your mind, in preference to me, for I have not forgotten that you intreated her to procure you the glory of going to fight the dragon." "I dare not contradict you, sire," replied the chevalier; "but I assure your majesty I make a great distinction between your favours and those of the queen, and if a subject were permitted to make a confidant of his sovereign, it would be a most delightful pleasure to me to declare my sentiments to you." The king interrupted him by asking him where he had left the queen.

Meanwhile, the queen was complaining to Floride of Fortuné's indifference to her—"The sight of him becomes hateful to me," cried she; "he must quit the court, or I must retire from it; I can no longer suffer the presence of an ungrateful youth, who dares show me so much contempt. What other human being would not esteem himself happy to please a queen, all-powerful in this kingdom? He is the only one in the world. Ah! the gods have reserved him to disturb the repose of my life!"

Floride was not at all sorry that her mistress was so displeased with Fortuné, and far from endeavouring to oppose her displeasure, she increased it by recalling to her mind many little circumstances, that perhaps she would not have chosen to remark. Her rage thus augmented, made her think of some new device to ruin the poor chevalier.

As soon as the king had rejoined her, and expressed his concern for her health, she said, "I own I was very ill, but it is difficult to remain so with Fortuné, he is so cheerful, and his ideas so amusing; you must know," continued she, "he has intreated me to obtain another favour from your majesty. He has asked, with the greatest

confidence of success, to be allowed to undertake the rashest enterprise in the world." "What, sister," cried the king, "does he wish to fight with a fresh dragon?" "With several at once," said she, "and is sure of conquering—shall I tell you? Well, then, he boasts he will compel the emperor to restore all our treasures; and to effect this, he does not require an army." "What a pity," replied the king, "that this poor boy should be guilty of so much extravagance!" "His fight with the dragon," added the queen, "has caused him to think of nothing but great adventures; and what hazard do you run in permitting him again to expose himself in your service?" "I hazard his life, which is dear to me," replied the king. "I should be extremely sorry to see him throw it away so wantonly." "Decide as you may, he is certain to die," said she, "for I assure you his desire is so strong to go and recover your treasures, that he will pine to death if you refuse him permission."

The king felt deeply distressed. "I cannot imagine," said he, "what has filled his head with all these chimeras; it pains me exceedingly to see him in this condition." "The fact is," replied the queen, "he has fought with the dragon; he has vanquished him, perhaps he will be equally successful in this adventure. I am seldom deceived by my presentiments; my heart tells me his enterprise will be fortunate: pray, brother, do not oppose his zeal." "Let him be called," added the king; "at all events I must represent to him the risk he runs." "That is just the way to exasperate him," replied the queen; "he will think you will not let him go, and I assure you he will not be deterred by any consideration for himself, for I have already said all that can be thought of on the subject." "Well," cried the king, "let him go then: I consent." The queen, delighted with this permission, sent for Fortuné. "Chevalier," said she, "thank the king; he grants you the permission you so much desire—to seek the Emperor Matapa, and by fair words, or by force, recover from him the treasures which he has despoiled us of. Prepare to depart with as much expedition as when you went to fight the dragon."

Fortuné, much surprised, recognised in this piece of malice the excess of the queen's fury against him. However, he felt pleasure in being able to lay down his life for a king who was so dear to him; and without making any objection to this extraordinary commission, he knelt, and kissed the king's hand, who, on his part, was very much affected. The queen felt a degree of shame to witness with what respect he received this order to encounter certain death. "Is it possible," said she, "that he has some affection for me, and that rather than contradict what I have advanced, he suffers the injury I have done him without a complaint? Ah! if I could so flatter myself, how much mischief would I wish myself for having caused so much to him!" The king said but little to the chevalier. He remounted his horse, and the queen entered her chariot again, feigning a return of her indisposition.

Fortuné accompanied the king to the end of the forest: then re-entering it to have some conversation with his horse, "My faithful Comrade," said he, "it is all over. I

must die; the queen has contrived it in a manner I should never have expected." "My charming master," replied the horse, "do not alarm yourself: although I was not present at all that passed, I have known it for some time; the embassy is not so terrible as you imagine." "Thou dost not then know," continued the chevalier, "that this emperor is the most passionate of men, and that if I suggest he should restore all that he has taken from the king, he would answer me only by having me strangled and thrown into the river." "I have been told of his violent conduct," said Comrade; "but let not that prevent your taking your attendants with you, and departing. If you perish there, we will all perish together; I hope, however, for better fortune."

The chevalier, a little consoled, returned home, issued the necessary orders, and afterwards went and received those of the king, together with his credentials. "You will tell the emperor from me," he said, "that I demand my subjects whom he holds in bondage, my soldiers who are prisoners, my horses which he rides, my goods, and my treasures." "What shall I offer him in exchange for all these things?" said Fortuné. "Nothing," replied the king, "but my friendship." The young ambassador's memory was not overburthened by his instructions. He departed without seeing the queen. She was offended at it; but he had little occasion to regard that. What could she do more in her greatest rage than she had already accomplished in the transports of her greatest love for him. An affection of this kind appeared to him the most dreadful thing in the world. Her confidante, who knew the whole secret, was exasperated with her mistress, for striving to sacrifice the flower of all chivalry.

Fortuné took in the Turkey-leather trunk all that was necessary for his journey. He was not satisfied with dressing himself magnificently; he wished his seven attendants who accompanied him to make as good an appearance: and as they had all of them excellent horses, and Comrade seemed rather to fly through the air than to gallop over the ground, they arrived in a very little time at the capital city in which the Emperor Matapa resided. It was larger than Paris, Constantinople, and Rome put together, and so populated, that all the cellars, garrets, and lofts were inhabited.

Fortuné was surprised to see a city of such prodigious extent. He demanded an audience of the emperor; but when he announced the subject of his embassy, although with a grace which added much to the effect of his arguments, the emperor could not help smiling. "If you were at the head of five hundred thousand men," said he, "one might listen to you; but they tell me you have but seven." "I never undertook, my lord," said Fortuné, "to make you restore what my master wishes by force, but by my very humble remonstrances." "Neither one way nor the other," added the emperor. "You will never succeed, unless you can accomplish something that has just occurred to me. It is, that you should find a man who has so good an appetite, that he can eat for his breakfast all the hot bread baked for the inhabitants of this great city."

The chevalier was most agreeably surprised at this proposition; but as he did not answer directly, the emperor burst into a fit of laughter. "You see," said he, "it is

natural to return a ridiculous answer to a ridiculous request." "Sire," said Fortuné, "I accept your offer. To-morrow I will bring a man who shall eat all the new bread, and likewise all the stale bread in this city. Order it to be brought into the great square, and you will have the pleasure of seeing him demolish it all, to the very crumbs." The emperor gave his assent. Nothing was talked of for the rest of the day, but the folly of the new ambassador; and Matapa swore he would put him to death, if he did not keep his word.

Fortuné, having returned to the ambassador's hotel, where he had taken up his abode, called Eater to him, and said, "Now is the time for thee to prepare thyself to eat bread: everything depends upon it." He thereupon told him what he had promised the emperor. "Do not make yourself uneasy, master," said Eater; "I shall eat till they will be tired of feeding me." Fortuné, however, could not help fearing the result of his exertions, and forbade them to give him any supper, that he might eat his breakfast the better; but this precaution was useless.

The emperor, the empress, and the princess, placed themselves in a balcony, that they might better see all that took place. Fortuné arrived with his little retinue; and he perceived in the great square six large mountains of bread, higher than the Pyrenees: he could not avoid turning pale. With Eater it had a contrary effect; for the anticipation of eating so much good bread delighted him: he begged they would not keep the smallest morsel from him, declaring he would not leave a bit for a mouse. The emperor and all the court amused themselves at the expense of Fortuné and his attendants; but Eater, becoming impatient, demanded the signal to commence. It was given to him by a flourish of drums and trumpets: at the same instant he threw himself upon one of the mountains of bread, which he devoured in less than a quarter of an hour, and gulped down all the rest at the same rate. Never was greater astonishment. Everybody asked if their eyes had not deceived them, and went to satisfy themselves by touching the place where they had placed the bread. Every creature that day, from the emperor to the cat, was compelled to dine without bread.

Fortuné, delighted with his great success, approached the emperor, and very respectfully asked if it was agreeable for him to keep his word with him. The emperor, rather irritated at being so duped, said, "Mr. Ambassador, it will not do to eat so much without drinking, therefore you, or some one of your people, must drink all the water out of the fountains, aqueducts, and reservoirs that are in the city, and all the wine that can be found in the cellars." "Sire," said Fortuné, "you are endeavouring to make it impossible for me to obey your orders: however, I would not mind attempting the adventure, if I might flatter myself you would restore to the king, my master, what I have asked for him." "I will do it," said the emperor, "if you succeed in your undertaking." The chevalier asked the emperor if he would be present; he replied, it would be so extraordinary a thing, that it deserved his attention, and getting into a magnificent chariot, he drove to the fountain of lions: there were seven marble lions, which threw from their mouths

torrents of water, which formed a river, upon which the inhabitants traversed the city in gondolas. Tippler approached the great basin, and, without taking breath, he drained it as dry as though there had never been any water in it. The fish in the river cried vengeance against him, for they knew not what had happened; in like manner he did by all the other fountains, aqueducts, and reservoirs; in fact, he could have drunk the sea, he was so thirsty. After such an example the emperor did not doubt but that he could drink the wine as easily as the water, and everybody was too much provoked to be willing to give him their own. But Tippler complained of the great injustice they were doing him; he said he should have the stomach-ache, and that he not only expected the wine, but that the spirits were also his due; so that Matapa, fearing he might appear covetous, consented to Tippler's request. Fortuné took his opportunity of begging the emperor to recollect his promise. At these words he looked very stern, and told him he would think of it. In fact he called his council together, and expressed his extreme vexation at having promised this young ambassador to return all he had won from his master; that he had considered the conditions he had attached thereunto were impossible to be accomplished, and quite sufficient to prevent his compliance. The princess, his daughter, who was one of the most lovely creatures in the world, having heard him speak thus, said, "You are aware, sire, that up to the present moment I have beaten all those who have dared to dispute the prize in a race with me. You must tell the ambassador that if he can reach before me a certain spot that shall be marked out, you will no longer hesitate to keep your word with him." The emperor embraced his child, thought her advice admirable, and the next morning received Fortuné very graciously.

"I have one more condition to make," said he, "which is, that you, or one of your people, should run a race with the princess, my daughter. I swear by all the elements, that if she be beaten I will give every satisfaction to your master." Fortuné did not refuse this challenge; he told the emperor that he accepted it, and Matapa immediately added that it should be in two hours. He sent to his daughter to get ready—it was an exercise she was accustomed to from her earliest infancy: she appeared in an avenue of orange-trees three leagues long, and which was so beautifully gravelled, that not a stone the size of a pin's head could be seen in it: she had on a light rose-coloured taffety dress, embroidered down the seams with gold and silver spangles; her beautiful hair was tied by a ribbon at the back, and fell carelessly upon her shoulders; she wore extremely pretty little shoes without heels, and a girdle of jewels, which displayed her figure sufficiently to prove there had never been seen one more beautiful—the young Atalanta could never have disputed it with her.

Fortuné arrived, followed by the faithful Swift, and his other attendants. The emperor took his seat with all his court. The ambassador announced that Swift would have the honour of running against the princess. The Turkey-leather trunk had furnished him with a holland cloth suit trimmed with English lace, flame-coloured silk stockings, feathers to match, and some beautiful linen. In this dress he looked very handsome;

the princess accepted him as her competitor, but before they set off she had some sort of liqueur brought her, which would strengthen, and give her additional speed. Swift said he ought to have some as well, and that the advantages ought to be equal. "Willingly," said she, "I am too just to refuse you." She immediately poured some out for him, but as he was not accustomed to this water, which was very strong, it mounted suddenly into his head; he made two or three turns, and, falling down at the foot of an orange-tree, went fast asleep.

In the meanwhile the signal was given for starting. They had already given it three times; the princess kindly waited for Swift to awake; she thought at last that it was of great consequence to free her father from the perplexity he was in, and accordingly she set off with wonderful grace and speed. As Fortuné was at the other end of the avenue, with all his people, he knew nothing of what was passing, till he saw the princess running alone, and hardly half a league from the winning place. "Ye gods!" cried he, speaking to his horse, "we are lost; I see nothing of Swift." "My lord," said Comrade, "Fine-ear must listen, perhaps he will be able to tell us what he is about." Fine-ear threw himself upon the ground, and although he was two leagues from him, he could hear him snoring. "Truly," said he, "he has no thoughts of coming; he sleeps as though he was in bed." "Ah! what shall we do then?" again cried Fortuné. "Master," said Comrade, "the Goodmarksman must let fly an arrow at the tip of his ear, to awake him." The Goodmarksman took his bow, and aimed so truly, that he pierced Swift's ear: the pain woke him, he opened his eyes, he saw the princess nearly at the goal, and heard nothing but shouts of joy, and great applause. He was at first astonished, but he soon regained the ground he had lost by sleeping. It appeared as though the winds were carrying him along, and they could not follow him with their eyes—in short, he arrived first, with the arrow still in his ear, for he had not had the time to take it out.

The emperor was so astonished at the three events which had come to pass since the arrival of the ambassador, that he believed the gods favoured him, and that he could no longer defer keeping his word. "Approach," said he to Fortuné, "that you may learn from my own lips, that I consent that you shall take from hence as much as you, or one of your men can carry, of your master's treasures; for you cannot suppose I would ever do more than that, nor that I would let either his soldiers, his subjects, or his horses go." The ambassador made him a profound bow; he told him that he was much obliged to him, and that he begged he would give his orders thereupon.

Matapa, excessively mortified, spoke to his treasurer, and then went to a palace that he had just without the walls of the city. Fortuné and his attendants immediately asked for admission into all the places where the king's furniture, curiosities, money, and jewels were deposited. They hid nothing from him, but it was on condition that but one man should be laden with them. Strongback made his appearance, and with his assistance the ambassador carried off all the furniture that was in the emperor's palace, five hundred statues of gold taller than giants, coaches, chariots, and all sorts of things, without

exception, with which Strongback walked so swiftly, it seemed as though he had not a pound weight upon his back.

When the emperor's ministers saw that the palace was dismantled to such an extent that there were neither chairs, nor chests, nor saucepans, nor a bed to lie upon, they hastened to warn him of it, and one may judge of his surprise, when he learned that one man carried everything. He exclaimed that he would not suffer it, and commanded his guards and musketeers to mount, and speedily follow the robbers. Although Fortuné was more than ten leagues off, Fine-ear told him that he heard a large body of cavalry galloping towards them, and the Goodmarksman, who had an excellent sight, saw them at that distance. Fortuné, who with his men had just arrived on the banks of a river, said to Tippler, "We have no boats; if thou couldst drink some of this water, we might be able to ford the river." Tippler instantly performed his duty. The ambassador was anxious to make the best use of his time, and get away; his horse said to him, "Do not be uneasy, let our enemies approach." They appeared upon the opposite bank, and knowing where the fishermen moored their boats, they speedily embarked in them, and rowed with all their might, when Boisterous inflated his cheeks, and commenced blowing; the river became agitated, the boats were upset, and the emperor's little army perished, without a single man escaping to tell the news.

Rejoiced at so favourable an event, each thought only of demanding the reward he considered he had deserved. They wanted to make themselves masters of all the treasures they had brought away, and a great dispute arose between them upon the division.

"If I had not won the prize," said the runner, "you would have had nothing." "And if I had not heard you snoring," said Fine-ear, "where should we have been then?" "Who would have awakened thee without me?" responded the Goodmarksman. "In truth," added Strongback, "I admire your arguments: who ought to dispute the right of first choice with me, since I have had the trouble of carrying it all? Without my assistance, you would not have had the opportunity of sharing it." "Say, rather, without mine," rejoined Tippler; "the river that I drank like a glass of lemonade would have puzzled you a little." "You would have been much more puzzled, if I had not upset the boats," said Boisterous. "I have been silent till now," interrupted Eater, "but I must remark that it was I who opened the ball in the great events which have passed; and that if I had left but a crust of bread, all would have been lost."

"My friends," said Fortuné, with a commanding air, "you have all done wonders; but we ought to leave it to the king to acknowledge our services. I should be very sorry to be rewarded by any other hand than his. Believe me, let us leave all to his will; he sent us to recover his treasures, and not to steal them. The thought of it even is so shameful, that I am of opinion it should never be mentioned again; and I assure you, I myself will do so much for you, that you will have nothing to regret, if it be possible the king should neglect you."

The seven gifted men, deeply penetrated by their master's remonstrance, fell at his feet and promised him that his will should be theirs; and with this determination they finished their journey. But the charming Fortuné, as he approached the city, felt agitated by a thousand various anxieties—the joy at having rendered such a considerable service to the king, to him for whom he felt so much affection, the hope of seeing him, of being favourably received, all this flattered him delightfully. On the other hand, the fear of again irritating the queen, and experiencing renewed persecutions from her, and from Floride, distressed him very much. At length he arrived; and all the people, overjoyed to see the immense quantity of valuables he had brought back with him, followed him with a thousand acclamations, the noise of which reached the palace.

The king could not believe in so extraordinary an event, and ran to the queen, to inform her of it. She was at first quite thunderstruck, but afterwards recovered herself a little. "You see," said she, "that the gods protect him: he has fortunately succeeded, and I am not surprised that he undertakes that which appears impossible to others." As she uttered these words, she saw Fortuné enter. He informed their majesties of the success of his journey, adding that the treasures were in the park, as there was so much gold, jewels, and furniture, there were no places sufficiently large to put them in. It is easy to believe that the king evinced much affection for so faithful, zealous, and charming a subject.

The presence of the chevalier, and all the successes he had achieved, reopened the wound in the queen's heart, that had never been quite healed. She thought him more charming than ever; and as soon as she was at liberty to speak to Floride, she recommenced her complaints. "Thou hast seen what I have done to ruin him," said she; "I thought it the only means of forgetting him. An unequalled fatality brings him back to me again; and whatever reasons I had to despise a man so much my inferior, and who returned my affections with the blackest ingratitude, I cannot help loving him still, and I am resolved to marry him privately." "To marry him!" cried Floride; "is it possible? Have I heard rightly?" "Yes," replied the queen, "thou hast heard my intentions; thou must aid me. I desire thee to bring Fortuné this evening to my chamber; I will myself declare to what extent my love for him will carry me." Floride, in despair at being chosen to assist in forwarding the marriage of her mistress and her lover, tried every means to dissuade the queen from seeing him; she represented the king's anger, if he came and discovered this intrigue: that perhaps he would order the chevalier to be executed, or at least condemn him to perpetual imprisonment, and she would never see him more. All her eloquence was in vain; she saw the queen was beginning to be angry—she had nothing, therefore, to do but obey her.

She found Fortuné in the gallery of the palace, where he was having the golden statues arranged that he had brought from Matapa. She told him to come in the evening to the queen. This order made him tremble. Floride perceived his distress.

"Oh," said she, "how I pity you! By what unlucky fate did the queen lose her heart to you? Alas! I know one less dangerous than hers, that dares not declare itself." The chevalier was not anxious for another explanation, he had already too much to endure; and as he did not seek to please the queen, he dressed himself very plainly, that she might not imagine he endeavoured to set himself off; but though he could dispense with his diamonds and his embroideries, he could not get rid of his personal charms—he was still lovely, still admirable, whatever humour he was in. There was no one to be compared to him.

The queen took great pains to heighten the lustre of her appearance by an extraordinary display of dress; she saw with pleasure that Fortuné was astonished. "Appearances," said she, "are sometimes so deceitful, that I am delighted to justify myself from the charges you no doubt brought against me in your heart. When I induced the king to send you to the emperor, it seemed as though my object was to destroy you. Nevertheless, depend upon it, handsome chevalier, that I knew all that would happen, and that I had no other view than your immortal honour." "Madam," said he, "you are too much above me to render it necessary you should condescend to any explanation. I do not presume to inquire into the motives that induced you to act thus; it was sufficient for me that I should obey the king." "You set too light a value on the explanation I wish to give you," added she; "but the time has arrived to convince you of my favour. Approach, Fortuné, approach; receive my hand as a pledge of my faith."

The poor chevalier was more thunderstruck than anybody had ever been in the world. Twenty times he was on the point of declaring his sex to the queen, but durst not do so, and only responded to her tokens of love by an excessive coldness of manner. He pointed out to her the numberless reasons for the king's anger, when he should hear that a subject, in the midst of his court, should have ventured to contract so important a marriage without his sanction. After the queen had vainly endeavoured to remove the obstacles that appeared to alarm him, she all at once assumed the voice and countenance of a fury; she flew into the most violent passion; she threatened him with a thousand punishments; she loaded him with abuse; she fought and scratched him; and then, turning her rage upon herself, she tore her hair, made her face and throat bleed, rent her veil and her lace; then crying out, "Help, guards! help!" called them into her chamber, and commanded them to fling that wretch into some dungeon: and ran herself to the king, to demand reparation for the violence of that young monster.

She told her brother, that for some time past he had had the audacity to declare his passion for her, that in the hope that absence, and her severity towards him, might have cured him, she had allowed no opportunity to pass of having him removed from the court, as the king might have observed; but that he was a villain that nothing could alter, that the king could see the extremities to which he had proceeded against her,

that she insisted on his being brought to justice; and that if that satisfaction was denied her she would know the reason of it.

The manner in which she spoke to the king alarmed him, for he knew her to be one of the most violent women in the world; she had much power, and she was quite capable of overturning the kingdom. Fortuné's boldness merited an exemplary punishment; everybody was already aware of what had occurred, and his own feelings ought to prompt him to avenge his sister. But, alas! upon whom was this vengeance to alight? Upon a gentleman who had exposed himself to so many perils in his service, to whom he was indebted for peace, and all his treasures, and for whom he had a particular affection, he would have given half his life to have saved his dear favourite. He represented to the queen how useful he had been to him, the services he had rendered the kingdom, his youth, and everything that might induce her to pardon him. She would not hear of it, she demanded his death. The king, finding he could not possibly avoid having him tried, appointed the mildest and most tender-hearted judges, in hopes they would visit the offence as light as possible.

But he was mistaken in his conjectures; the judges were for establishing their reputation at the expense of this unfortunate prisoner; and as it was an affair that would make much noise in the world, they armed themselves with the utmost severity, and condemned Fortuné without deigning to hear him. His sentence was, that he should be stabbed three times to the heart with a poignard, because it was his heart that was guilty.

The king trembled at this sentence as though it had been passed upon himself; he banished all the judges who had pronounced it, but could not save his beloved Fortuné;[1] and the queen triumphed in the punishment he was to suffer—her eyes thirsting for blood, demanded that of her illustrious victim. The king renewed his intercessions, but they only served to exasperate her. At length, the day fixed for this terrible execution arrived. They came to lead the chevalier from the prison in which they had placed him, and where he had been living without a single person in the world to speak to. He was therefore ignorant of what crime the queen had accused him, and merely imagined it some new persecution his indifference to her had brought upon him; and that which distressed him the most was, that he believed the king participated with the queen in her rage against him. Floride, inconsolable at seeing the situation in which her lover was placed, took a most violent resolution, which was to poison the queen and herself if Fortuné should be doomed to a cruel death. From the moment

[1] This punishment of the judges without respiting the accused, is an incident which appears to have been founded on a strange story of Arragonese justice, told by the Countess in her "Travels into Spain." "Yet what is no less singular," she says, "is, that justice remains always sovereign; and though the unjust judge be punished severely for his wrong decree, yet it subsists in its full force and is fully executed. If then, any unhappy wretch is sentenced to death he is not spared, though his innocence be discovered and made as clear as noonday: but his judges are executed too, before his face, which in my mind is a poor consolation."—Letter iv., dated Lerma, March 5, 1679.

she knew the sentence, despair seized her; she thought but of how to put her intentions into effect. The poison she procured, however, was not as powerful as she desired, for although she had given it to the queen, who, not feeling the effects of it, caused the charming chevalier to be brought into the great square of the palace, that the execution might take place in her presence. The executioners brought him from his dungeon according to their custom, and led him like a tender lamb to the slaughter. The first object that struck his sight was the queen in her chariot, who could not be too near him, wishing if possible that his blood might spurt out upon her. The king shut himself up in his chamber that he might lament unchecked the fate of his beloved favourite.

When they had tied Fortuné to the stake, they tore off his robe and his vest to pierce his heart, but what was the astonishment of this numerous assembly when they uncovered the alabaster bosom of Belle-belle! Everybody saw it was an innocent girl, unjustly accused. The queen was so agitated and confused at such a sight that the poison began to take extraordinary effect. She fell into long convulsions from which she only recovered to utter agonising lamentations. The people, who loved Fortuné, had already given her her liberty. They ran to announce this wonderful news to the king, who had abandoned himself to the deepest grief. Joy now took the place of sorrow; he ran into the square, and was delighted to perceive Fortuné's transformation.

The last sighs of the queen somewhat subdued his raptures, but when he reflected upon her malice he could not regret her. He resolved to marry Belle-belle, to repay her for the great obligations he was under to her, and declared his intentions to her. It is easy to believe she was at the height of her wishes, not so much for the sake of the crown as for the sake of so worthy a monarch, and one for whom she had so long entertained the greatest affection.

The day being fixed for celebrating the king's marriage, Belle-belle reassumed her female attire, and appeared a thousand times more charming than in the garb of the chevalier. She consulted her horse, as to her future adventures, and he promised her nothing but what would be agreeable; and in gratitude for all the good services he had done her, she had a stable built for him of ebony and ivory, and there was nothing meaner than a satin mattress for him to lie down on. As for her seven followers, they were rewarded in proportion to their services. Comrade, however, disappeared; they came and told Belle-belle. This loss distressed the queen, for she adored him; she ordered her horse to be sought for in every direction, which they did in vain for three whole days; the fourth day she was so uneasy, she was obliged to rise before it was light. She descended into the garden, traversed the wood, and entered a large meadow, calling, from time to time, "Comrade! my dear Comrade! what has become of you? Have you deserted me? I still require your sage advice; come back, come back, and give it me!" As she thus spoke, she suddenly perceived a second sun rising in the west, she stopped to admire this prodigy; her astonishment was without bounds to see

it advancing towards her by degrees, and in the course of a few minutes, to recognise her horse, whose trappings were all covered with jewels, and who pranced before a chariot of pearls and topazes, which was drawn by twenty-four sheep; their wool was of gold thread and purl,[1] exceedingly brilliant; their traces were of crimson satin, covered with emeralds; and their horns and ears were ornamented with carbuncles. Belle-belle recognised in the chariot the fairy her protectress, accompanied by the count her father, and her two sisters, who called out to her, clapping their hands, and making affectionate signs to her, intimating that they had come to her wedding. She thought she should die with joy, she knew not what to do or to say to prove her delight. She placed herself in the chariot, and this pompous equipage entered the palace, where everything had already been prepared to celebrate the grandest ceremony which could take place in the kingdom. Thus the enamoured king united his fate to that of his mistress, and this charming adventure has passed from age to age down to the one we live in.

"The lion upon Lybia's burning plain,
Press'd by the hunter, gall'd by countless darts,
May less be dreaded than that woman vain,
Who sees her charms despised, and foil'd her arts.

"Poison and steel are trifles in her eyes,
As agents of her vengeance and her hate;
The dire effects that from such passions rise
You have beheld in Fortuné's strange fate.

"The change to Belle-belle saved the guiltless fair,
And struck her royal persecutor down.
Heaven makes the innocent its special care,
And vice defeating, virtue loves to crown."[2]

[1] Cunetille, Purl, is a sort of gold or silver lace or fringe.

[2] Madame D'Aulnoy has in this instance certainly appended a very commonplace moral to a very original story. The first four lines are a weak elaboration of the well-known English couplet—

"Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorn'd."

CONGREVE, "Mourning Bride."

# THE PIGEON AND THE DOVE

ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who loved each other so dearly that they served as an example to all their wedded subjects; and it would have surprised any one to find a disunited family in their kingdom, which was called the Kingdom of Deserts.

The queen had had several children, but they had all died except a daughter, whose beauty was so great, that if anything could have consoled her for the loss of the others, it would have been the charms that distinguished the survivor. The king and queen educated her as their only hope; but the happiness of the royal family was of short duration. The king being out hunting one day on a skittish horse, the animal took fright at some shots that were fired, and started off with him like lightning. The king endeavoured to pull him up as he was approaching the brink of a precipice; he reared and fell with the king under him, who received such severe injury, that he died before any of his suite could come up to his assistance.

The fatal intelligence reduced the queen to the greatest extremity. She could not control her grief; she felt it was too violent for her to attempt resisting its effects; and thought only of settling the affairs of the kingdom in such a manner, that she might die in peace as far as regarded the future welfare of her daughter. She had a friend who was called the sovereign fairy, because she had great authority over all empires, and was exceedingly skilful. She wrote to her, with her dying hand, to express her desire to breathe her last in the fairy's arms; to tell her that she must come quickly if she wished to see her once more alive, and that she had something of consequence to say to her.

Though the fairy was extremely busy, she left everything she was about, and getting into her fiery chariot, which went faster than the sun, she came to the queen, who was impatiently awaiting her. She consulted the fairy on several matters touching the regency of the kingdom, begging her to accept it, and take charge of the little Princess Constancia. "If anything," she added, "can calm the anxiety I feel at leaving her an orphan at so early an age, it is the hope that you will prove the friendship which you have always manifested for me by extending it to my child; that she will find in you a mother who has the power of rendering her much more happy and perfect than I could have done, and that you will select a husband for her so charming, that she will never

love anybody but him." "Great queen," said the fairy, "thou desirest nothing that thou art not justified in desiring, and I will neglect no means of befriending thy daughter; but I have cast her nativity, and it appears as if fate, angry with nature for having exhausted all her treasures in the formation of the princess, had resolved to make her suffer; and thy royal majesty must be aware, that destiny pronounces some sentences so imperatively, that it is impossible to evade their execution." "At least," rejoined the queen, "alleviate her misfortunes, and do all in your power to prevent them. By vigilant attention the greatest evils may sometimes be avoided." The sovereign fairy promised to do all she desired; and the queen, having embraced her dear Constancia a hundred times over, expired in tolerable tranquillity.

The fairy read the stars as easily as we do the new stories that every day issue from the press. She saw that the princess was threatened with the fatal love of a giant, whose dominions were not far distant from the kingdom of Deserts. She was fully aware that it was above all things necessary to avoid him, and she saw no better mode of doing so than by concealing her dear ward at some extreme corner of the earth, so far distant from the territory over which the giant ruled, that there would be little probability of his coming to trouble their repose.

As soon as the sovereign fairy had selected ministers capable of governing the state she intended to confide to them, and had established such excellent laws that all the sages of Greece could not have devised any comparable to them, she entered, one night, the chamber of Constancia, and without waking her, carried her off on her fiery camel to a fertile country, where people lived without ambition or trouble; it was a real valley of Tempè, where no one was to be found but shepherds and shepherdesses, who dwelt in cottages of their own construction.

The fairy was aware, that if the princess passed sixteen years without seeing the giant, she had only to return in triumph to her kingdom: but that if he set eyes on her sooner, she would be exposed to great sufferings. The fairy, therefore, took every precaution to conceal the princess from the sight of everybody, and that she might appear less handsome, she dressed her like a shepherdess, with coarse caps always pulled over her forehead; but as the sun darts its long rays of light through the cloud that envelopes it, this lovely princess could not be so shrouded but that some of her charms must be observable; and notwithstanding all the fairy's care, Constancia was spoken of as a masterpiece of the gods that enchanted all hearts. Her beauty was not the only thing that rendered her a wonder; the sovereign fairy had endowed her with so admirable a voice, and such skill in touching any instrument she fancied playing on, that without having ever been taught music, she was capable of giving lessons to the Muses, and even to celestial Apollo himself: she was not dull, therefore, in her solitude. The fairy had explained to her the reasons she had for bringing her up in such obscurity. As she had great good sense, she comprehended them so perfectly that her protectress was astonished that any one so young could display so much docility and intelligence.

She had not visited the kingdom of Deserts for some months, as it was always painful for her to leave the princess; but her presence there had become necessary, as they only acted by her orders, and the ministers were not equally attentive to their duties. She departed, therefore, strictly advising Constancia to lock herself up until she should return.

The fair princess had a little ram she was very fond of. She amused herself with making garlands of flowers for him, or sometimes with dressing him up with bows of ribbon; she called him Ruson. He was more intelligent than any of his companions. He knew the voice, and understood the commands of his mistress, and obeyed her implicitly. "Ruson," she would say to him, "fetch me my spindle;" he would run into her room, and bring it to her immediately, cutting a thousand capers. He frisked about her, he would eat nothing but the herbs she gathered for him, and would rather have died with thirst than drink anywhere except out of the hollow of her hand. He would shut the door, beat time when she sang, and bleat in tune. Ruson was charming; Ruson was beloved; Constancia talked to him eternally, and lavished on him a thousand caresses.

Notwithstanding all this, a pretty ewe in the neighbourhood was not less agreeable to Ruson than his mistress. Sheep are but sheep, and the meanest ewe was, in Ruson's eyes, more beautiful than the mother of love. Constancia often reproached him for his gallantries. "Little libertine," said she to him, "canst thou not stay with me? Thou art so dear to me that I neglect all my flock for thee, and yet thou wilt not forsake that sorry ewe to please me." She tied him up with a chain of flowers, at which he seemed very much vexed, and pulled and pulled till he broke it. "Ah!" said Constancia angrily to him, "the fairy has often told me that men are wilful as thou art; that they cannot endure the slightest constraint, and are the most refractory creatures in the world. Since thou wouldst be like them, naughty Ruson, go, find thy beautiful beast of a ewe! If the wolf devour thee, devoured thou must be; I may not be able to help thee."

The amorous ram paid no attention to the advice of Constancia. Having been all day long with his dear ewe, close by the cottage in which the princess sat alone at her work, she suddenly heard him bleat so loudly and pitifully that she felt sure some fatal accident had happened to him. She rose in great agitation, looked out, and saw a wolf carrying off poor Ruson. She no longer thought of all the fairy had said to her at parting. She ran after the robber, crying, "A wolf! a wolf!" She pursued him, flinging stones, and even her crook, at him without making him quit his prey; but alas! in passing near a wood, there came out of it another sort of wolf—a horrible giant! At the sight of this dreadful colossus, the princess, paralysed with fright, raised her eyes to heaven for succour, and prayed the earth to open and swallow her. Neither earth nor heaven listened to her prayer; she deserved to be punished for not having obeyed the sovereign fairy.

The giant spread out his arms to prevent her passing, but terrible and furious as he was, he felt the effect of her beauty. "What rank holdest thou amongst the goddesses?" said he, in a voice louder than thunder. "For think not I can be mistaken—thou art no mortal. Tell me but thy name, and if thou art the daughter or the wife of Jupiter? Who are thy brothers? What are thy sisters? I have long sought for a goddess to make her my wife, and happily I have now met with thee!" The princess felt tongue-tied with terror: the accents died away upon her lips.

As he found she made no answer to his gallant questions, "For a divinity," said he, "thou hast but little wit;" and without more words he opened a great sack and flung her into it.

The first thing she saw at the bottom of it was the wicked wolf and the poor ram; the giant had amused himself by catching them. "Thou wilt die with me, my dear Ruson," said she, kissing him. "'Tis a poor consolation; it would be much better if we could escape together."

This sad reflection made her weep bitterly; she sobbed and sighed aloud. Ruson bleated; the wolf howled; this noise awoke a dog, a cat, a cock, and a parrot, who had been all asleep, and they began in their turn to make a frantic noise. Here was a strange uproar in the giant's game-bag. At last being tired with hearing them, he determined to kill them all; but on second thoughts, contented himself with tying the mouth of the sack and throwing it on the top of a tree, after having marked it, that he might know where to look for his spoil again. He was on his road to fight a duel with another giant, and all this outcry displeased him.

The princess felt sure that, let him but have taken a step or two, he was already a long way off; for a horse at full speed could not overtake him when he was but sauntering. She drew out her scissors and cut the cloth of the sack, then let out her dear Ruson, the dog, the cat, the cock, and the parrot; and lastly got out herself, leaving the wolf behind, to punish him for eating poor little sheep. The night was very dark; it was strange for her to find herself alone in the midst of a forest, without knowing which way to turn her steps; not being able to catch a glimpse of earth or sky, and dreading every instant to meet the giant again.

She walked as fast as she could, and would have fallen a hundred times over, but the animals she had set at liberty, grateful for the favour they had received at her hands, would not forsake her, and were very serviceable to her on her journey. The cat's eyes were so bright that they lighted her like a flambeau; the dog by his barking acted as sentinel; the cock crowed to frighten the lions;[1] the parrot chattered so loudly, that, to hear him, you would have thought twenty people were talking together—so that the robbers slunk away and left the road free for the passage of our fair traveller; and the ram, walking a little in advance of her, preserved her from tumbling into some great holes, which he had considerable difficulty himself in scrambling out of.

[1] Ancient naturalists entertained the idea that the lion was excessively terrified by the crowing of a cock.

Constancia walked at random, recommending herself to her good friend the fairy, from whom she hoped to receive some assistance, although she reproached herself severely for not having obeyed her commands; but sometimes she feared she was forsaken by her. She would have been very glad if chance could have led her back to the cottage in which she had been secretly brought up; but, as she knew not the way, she did not venture to flatter herself that anything but an especial interposition of Providence could procure her that happiness.

She found herself at daybreak on the bank of a river that watered one of the most agreeable meadows in the world. She looked about her, and saw neither dog, nor cat, nor cock, nor parrot; Ruson was her sole remaining companion.

"Alas! where am I?" said she: "This beautiful spot is unknown to me. What will become of me? Who will protect me? Ah! little ram, how dearly hast thou cost me! If I had not run after thee, I should still be with the sovereign fairy, I should neither be in fear of the giant nor of any unfortunate adventure." Ruson seemed to tremble as he listened to her, and to be aware of his fault. At last the princess, weary and depressed, left off chiding him, and seated herself beside the water; and as she was very tired, and the shade of several trees protected her from the heat of the sun, her eyes closed gently, her head sank on the grass, and she fell into a deep slumber.

She had no one to guard her but the faithful Ruson. Suddenly he trod upon her, and pulled her; and what was her astonishment on waking, to perceive, about twenty paces from her, a young man behind some bushes, where he had hidden himself to see without being seen. The beauty of his form and face, the nobleness of his manner, and the magnificence of his dress so surprised the princess, that she rose hastily, with the intention of hurrying away. I know not what secret spell arrested her flight. She cast a timid glance on the stranger; the giant had scarcely caused her so much alarm; but fear arises from various causes. The looks and actions of this youthful pair sufficiently indicated the sentiments with which they had already inspired each other.

They would have remained, perhaps, a long time without speaking, except with their eyes, if the prince had not heard the sound of horns, and the cry of the hounds approaching. He saw that the princess was astonished at it. "Fear nothing, beautiful shepherdess," said he to her; "you are safe in this spot: would to heaven those who see you here were equally so!"

"My lord," said she, "I implore your protection. I am a poor orphan, who has no other course left her but to become a shepherdess. Obtain for me the charge of a flock; I will tend it most carefully." "Happy will be the sheep," said he smiling, "that you lead to the pastures; but in short, lovely shepherdess, if you desire it, I will speak to the queen my mother, and shall feel delighted to begin from this day to render you all the service in my power." "Ah, my lord," said Constancia, "I crave your pardon for the liberty I have taken; I should not have dared so much had I known your rank."

The prince heard her with the utmost astonishment. He discovered in her, great

intelligence and polished manners. Nothing could accord better with her exquisite beauty; but nothing could be less expected from the plainness of her attire and her condition of a shepherdess. He even endeavoured to induce her to make choice of some other employment. "Have you reflected," said he, "that you expose yourself to pass the day all alone in a wood, or on some downs, with no company but your simple sheep? Will the delicate bearing I remark in you accommodate itself to such solitude? Who knows, besides, if the fame of your charms, when it shall spread through the country, will not attract to you a thousand importunate lovers? I, myself, adorable shepherdess, will leave the court to follow you, and what I do, others will do also."

"Cease, my lord," said she, "to flatter me by praises so far beyond my desert. I was born in a village; I have never known any other than a rustic life, and I hope you will allow me quietly to keep the queen's sheep, if she will deign to confide them to my care. I would even beseech her to place me under some more experienced shepherdess, and then, as I should be always with her, it is quite certain I should never feel dull."

The prince was prevented from replying; his attendants appeared on the brow of a little hill. "I leave you, charming creature," he cried, hurriedly; "I cannot allow so many to share the happiness I enjoy in beholding you. Go to the end of this meadow; you will find a house there, in which you may dwell in safety, if you say you come from me." Constancia, who would have been much troubled at finding herself in such a numerous company, hastened towards the spot to which Constancio (such was the prince's name) had directed her.

He followed her with his eyes; he sighed tenderly, and, mounting his horse, placed himself at the head of his company, and discontinuing the chase, returned to the palace. He found the queen exceedingly irritated against an old shepherdess, who had given her a very bad account of her lambs. After the queen had well scolded her, she ordered her never to appear in her presence again.

This was a favourable opportunity for Constancio; he told his mother he had met a young girl who was very desirous of entering her service, that she looked like a careful person, and did not seem mercenary. The queen was much pleased with her son's account of this shepherdess; she accepted her offer without seeing her, and desired the prince to give orders for her to be sent, with the rest, to the pastures belonging to the crown. He was enchanted that the queen dispensed with the appearance of the shepherdess at the palace. Certain busy and jealous feelings made him apprehensive of rivals, notwithstanding there were none who could dispute with him, either in rank or in merit. In point of fact, he was less afraid of the nobles than of the humbler persons about the court, and imagined her more likely to take a fancy to a simple shepherd than to a prince who was so near to the throne. It would be difficult to recount all the reflections to which this gave rise. How he reproached his heart—that heart which till now had never loved, which had never thought any one worthy of him, had now bestowed itself on a girl of such obscure origin, that he could never own his passion without a blush. He determined to struggle with it; and, persuading himself that

absence was an unfailing remedy, particularly in the case of a dawning affection, he avoided the sight of the shepherdess. He followed his favourite amusement of hunting, and other sports. Wherever he caught sight of sheep, he turned from them as though they had been serpents; so that, after some little time, the wound he had received appeared less painful to him. But on one of the hottest of the dog-days, Constancio, fatigued by a long run with the hounds, finding himself on the banks of the river, followed its course under the shade of the lote-trees,[1] that mixed their branches with the willows, and rendered this spot as cool as it was lovely. He fell into a profound reverie; he was alone, and he thought no longer of all those who were waiting for him; when suddenly he was struck by the charming tones of a voice which seemed to him celestial. He stopped to listen, and was not a little surprised to hear these words:—

"Alas! I had vowed I would live without love,
But perjured the god has resolved I should prove,
I feel in my bosom his torturing dart,
Constancio, master he makes of my heart!

"When weary with hunting, oppress'd by the heat,
He sought the cool shade of this tranquil retreat,
Methought, as I breathlessly gazed on him there,
My eyes ne'er had feasted on vision so fair.

"Mute, motionless, lost, in that moment of bliss,
The treacherous archer his mark could not miss;
Too sweet is the pain that I since have endured,
I joy in a wound that can never be cured."

His curiosity prevailed over the pleasure he experienced in listening to so sweet a voice; he advanced quickly. He had caught the name of Constancio; but though it was his own, it might be that of a shepherd as well as of a prince; and he was therefore uncertain, whether it was for him, or for some other, those verses had been composed. He had scarcely mounted a little eminence covered with trees, when he perceived, at the foot of it, the lovely Constancia; she was seated by the side of a streamlet, the rapid fall of which caused so agreeable a sound, that it appeared as if intended to harmonise with her voice. Her faithful ram crouched on the grass, kept, like the favourite of the flock, much closer to her than any of the others. Constancia gave him occasionally little taps with her crook, caressing him with childish affection; and every time she touched him, he kissed her hand, and looked up in her face with eyes beaming with intelligence. "Ah! how happy wouldst thou be," said the prince, in an undertone, "if thou didst but know the value of the caresses lavished on thee! Surely this shepherdess is more beautiful than when I first saw her. Love! Love! what wouldst thou with me? Ought I to love her? or, rather, am I longer in a condition to resist it? I have studiously avoided her, because I knew full well the danger of seeing her. Ye gods! what emotions did I not suffer from the first! Reason essayed to help me, and I fled so enchanting an object. Alas! I meet with her but to hear her sing of the happy youth she has chosen!"

[1] See note, page 24.

Whilst he thus meditated, the shepherdess rose to collect her flock, and drive them into another meadow, where she had left her companions. The prince feared to lose this opportunity of speaking to her; he advanced towards her eagerly. "Charming shepherdess," said he to her, "will you not allow me to ask, if the little service I have rendered you has given you some gratification?" At the sight of the prince, Constancia blushed; her cheeks became tinged with the deepest crimson. "My lord," said she to him, "I should have taken care to offer you my very humble thanks, if it could have befitted a poor girl like me to approach a prince like you; but though I have not done so, heaven is my witness that I am not ungrateful for your kindness, and that I pray the gods to crown your days with happiness." "Constancia," replied he, "if it be true that my endeavours to serve you have inspired you with so much gratitude as you profess, it is easy for you to prove it to me." "Ah, what can I possibly do for you, my lord?" inquired Constancia eagerly. "You can tell me," added he, "to whom the words applied which I have just heard you sing." "As they are not mine," she answered, "it would be difficult for me to give you any information on that subject." While she spoke, he examined her countenance narrowly, he saw she blushed, that she was confused, and kept her eyes fixed on the ground. "Why would you conceal your feelings from me, Constancia?" said he. "Your face betrays the secret of your heart—you love!" He paused, and riveted his glances still more earnestly upon her. "My lord," said she, "that which interests me so much little deserves the attention of a great prince; and I am so unused to talking while I tend my dear sheep, that I beseech you to pardon me if I do not answer your questions." She made so hasty a retreat, that he had not time to stop her.

Jealousy will sometimes rekindle the torch of love. The prince's passion at this moment burst into such a flame, that nothing could ever extinguish it. He discovered a thousand graces in that young maiden which he had not remarked the first time he saw her. The manner in which she had left him, convinced him as much as her words that she was partial to some shepherd; a deep melancholy took possession of his soul. He dared not follow her, great as was his anxiety to renew the conversation. He flung himself upon the spot she had just quitted, and after recalling to his memory the verses he had heard her sing, he wrote them down in his tablets, and examined them carefully. "It is only within these few days," said he, "she has seen this Constancio, who so occupies her thoughts. Must I bear the same name, and be so far from his good fortune? How coldly she looked on me! She seemed more indifferent to-day than when I first met with her. Her chief care was to find some pretext for leaving me." These thoughts afflicted him deeply, for he could not comprehend how a simple shepherdess could be so indifferent to a powerful prince.

As soon as he returned to the palace, he sent for a youth who was his companion in all his pleasures; he was of high birth, and very amiable. He ordered him to assume the dress of a shepherd, obtain a flock, and lead it every day to the queen's pastures, in order to observe Constancia without being suspected by her. Mirtain (so was the

young gentleman named) was too anxious to please his master to neglect an opportunity of so doing in a matter which appeared so much to interest him. He promised to obey his commands to the best of his ability; and the very next morning he was ready to proceed to the pastures. The keeper of them would not have admitted him, had he not produced an order from the prince, in which it was stated that he was the prince's shepherd, and had charge of his flock.

He was immediately permitted to mix with the rural company. He was very gallant, and easily succeeded in making himself agreeable to the shepherdesses generally; but with regard to Constancia, he found she possessed a spirit so far above what she appeared to be, that he could not reconcile the existence of so much beauty, wit, and merit with the rude and country life she led. It was in vain he followed her; he always found her alone in the depths of the forest, singing abstractedly. He observed no shepherd venture to attempt to please her; it seemed to be too difficult a task. Mirtain made that great attempt himself; he courted her assiduously, and learned from his own experience that she declined forming any engagement. Every evening he reported to the prince the state of affairs; all the information he gave him had only the effect of distracting him. "Do not deceive yourself, my lord," said Mirtain one day to him; "if this beautiful girl does love, it must be some one in her own country." "If that were the case," said the prince, "would she not return to it?" "How do we know," rejoined Mirtain, "that she has not some reasons which prevent her returning to her native land? She may have quarrelled with her lover." "Alas!" exclaimed the prince, "she sang with too much tenderness the words I heard." "It is a fact," continued Mirtain, "that all the trees are covered with the initials of their names; and as no one seems to please her in these parts, some one undoubtedly must have done so elsewhere." "Ascertain," said the prince, "her sentiments for me. Speak well or ill of me, thou mayest in some measure arrive at what she thinks of me."

Mirtain failed not to find an opportunity to speak to Constancia. "What ails you, fair shepherdess?" said he to her; "you appear melancholy, notwithstanding all the reasons you have to be more joyous than any other." "And what reasons do you consider I have for being joyous?" she inquired. "I am reduced to tend sheep, far from my own land, hearing nothing of my relations: is all this so very agreeable?" "No," replied Mirtain; "but you are the most charming person in the world: you have much wit, you sing exquisitely, and nothing can be compared to your beauty." "Supposing I possessed all these advantages, they would be of little value to me," said she, heaving a deep sigh. "Nay, then," said Mirtain, "you are ambitious; you believe one must be born to a throne, or descended from the gods, to live happily. Ah! undeceive yourself. I serve Prince Constancio, and, notwithstanding the disparity of our rank, I am frequently permitted to approach him. I have studied him; I can see what is passing in his mind, and I know that he is far from happy." "And what disturbs his peace?" said the princess. "A fatal passion," continued Mirtain. "He is in love!" exclaimed Constancia, with an air of anxiety. "Alas! how I pity him! But what am I saying?"

she continued, blushing deeply: "he is too amiable not to be beloved." "He dares not so much flatter himself, fair shepherdess," said Mirtain; "but if you would kindly assure him of that fact, he would have more faith in your words than in those of any other." "It would not befit me," said she, "to meddle in the affairs of a great prince. Those of which you speak are too delicate for me to think of entering upon. Adieu, Mirtain," she added, quitting him hastily: "if you would oblige me, you will speak no more to me about your prince, or his amours."

She hurried away, greatly agitated. She could not have been insensible to the merits of the prince; her first meeting with him had never been effaced from her mind, and but for the secret spell which detained her despite herself, it is certain she would have risked everything to find once more the sovereign fairy. We might, indeed, feel surprised that that skilful person, who knew everything, did not fly to her assistance; but it no longer depended upon her to do so. From the moment the giant had met the princess, the latter was subjected to the influence of the stars for a certain period: her destiny had to be fulfilled; so that the fairy was obliged to be contented with going to see her occasionally in a sunbeam. Constancia's eyes were not able to look at it steadily enough to discover her protectress in it.

The charming girl had observed, with some mortification, that the prince had neglected her so completely, that he might never have seen her again, had not chance led him to the spot where she was singing. She endeavoured to stifle her inclination for him; and if it be possible to love and hate a person at the same time, I may say she hated him because she loved him too well! How many tears did she shed in secret! Ruson was the only witness of them; to him she frequently confided her sorrows, as if he were capable of understanding her; and when he frisked about the fields with the ewes, she would say to him, "Beware, Ruson!—beware! Let not love inflame thy heart; of all evils, 'tis the greatest: and shouldst thou love, and not be loved in return, poor little ram, what wouldst thou do!"

These reflections were followed by a thousand reproaches, which she heaped upon herself for cherishing an affection for a prince who manifested so much indifference for her. She had determined to forget him, when she accidentally found him in that pleasant spot, to which he had retired to muse uninterruptedly on the lovely shepherdess he avoided. Sleep had stolen upon him, and he had stretched himself on the grass. She saw him, and her affection for him received fresh force. She could not resist stringing together the words which had caused so much anxiety to the prince; but what did she not suffer in her turn, when Mirtain informed her that Constancio was in love! All the command she could exercise over herself could not prevent her frequently changing colour. Mirtain, who had his reasons for observing her, noticed and was delighted at it, and hastened to report what had passed to his master.

The prince was much less inclined to flatter himself than his confidant was. He saw nothing but indifference in the conduct of the shepherdess. He attributed it to the happy Constancio whom she loved, and the next morning he went in search of her. The

instant she perceived him, she flew from him as though she had seen a tiger or a lion. Flight was the only remedy she could imagine for her pain. Ever since her conversation with Mirtain she felt she ought to neglect no means of tearing the prince from her heart, and that the only hope of doing so lay in her avoiding the sight of him.

What were the feelings of Constancio when his shepherdess fled from him so abruptly. Mirtain was with him. "Thou seest," said the prince to him, "thou seest the effect of thy labours. Constancia hates me: I dare not follow her to obtain an explanation from her myself."

"You have too much consideration, my lord, for a mere country girl," replied Mirtain; "and if you will permit me, I will go and order her, in your name, to come back to you." "Ah! Mirtain," exclaimed the prince, "what a difference exists between the lover and the confidant! I think only of doing everything to please this charming girl; I have observed in her a sort of refinement, which would ill accord with the rough measures thou art for adopting. I had rather continue to suffer than offend her." As he uttered these words, he turned his steps in another direction, with so melancholy an air, that one who was much less interested in him than Constancia might have pitied him.

As soon as he was out of sight, she retraced her steps to have the pleasure of being on the spot he had just quitted. "'Tis here," said she, "he stood; 'twas from thence he looked at me: but, alas! in every place I find how little he thinks of me. He comes hither but to muse in freedom upon her he loves; and yet," continued she, "have I a right to complain? What chance was there that he should attach himself to a girl he thinks so much beneath him?" She felt disposed sometimes to relate her adventures to him; but the sovereign fairy had so strictly forbidden her to speak of them, that her duty always prevailed over her inclination, and she eventually determined to keep her secret.

In the course of a few days, the prince again made his appearance. She avoided him carefully. He was much distressed at it, and desired Mirtain to reproach her with her behaviour. She pretended she had acted unconsciously; but as the prince had condescended to remark it, she would not do so in future. Mirtain, much gratified by having obtained this promise from her, informed his master, and the next morning he went in search of her. On his accosting her she appeared speechless and motionless; and her confusion if possible increased when he declared his passion. Much as she desired to believe him, she was afraid of being deceived, and that forming his opinion of her from appearances, he only sought to amuse himself by dazzling her with professions which would not be seriously addressed to a poor shepherdess. Nettled by this idea, her pride restored her composure, and she received the assurances of his affection with so much coldness, that it confirmed all his suspicions.

"Your heart is gone!" said he; "another has succeeded in charming you. But I call the gods to witness, that if I can discover him, he shall feel the full effects of my wrath!" "I ask no favour for any one, my lord," she replied. "If you should ever

know my sentiments, you will find they are far different from those you attribute to me." The prince at these words felt his hopes revive, but they were soon destroyed by the conversation that followed; for she protested to him, that her indifference was not to be overcome, and that she felt convinced she should never love any one. These last words cast him into inexpressible grief; he exercised the greatest constraint over himself to prevent her observing the extent of his affliction. Either from the violence he thus did to his feelings, or from the excess of his passion, which was only increased by the obstacles which presented themselves to it, he fell so dangerously ill that the physicians, not knowing the cause of his disorder, soon began to despair of his recovery. Mirtain, who by his orders still remained in attendance on Constancia, communicated to her the sad tidings. She listened to them with a confusion and agitation difficult to describe. "Do you know any remedy," he asked her, "for fever, and violent pains in the head and heart?" "I know one," she replied; "it consists of simples and flowers; but everything depends on the manner in which they are applied." "Will you not go to the palace and apply them yourself?" added Mirtain. "No," said she, blushing, "I should be too much afraid of not succeeding." "How!" continued he; "is it possible you will neglect anything that might restore him to us? I believed you to be very hard-hearted; but you are a hundred times more so than I had imagined." Mirtain's reproaches gratified Constancia. She was delighted to be pressed by him to see the prince. It was only to obtain that satisfaction that she had boasted of being acquainted with a remedy for his complaint; for the truth is, that she knew of none.

Mirtain went and told the prince all that the shepherdess had said, and how ardently she desired the restoration of his health. "Thou seekest to flatter me," said Constancio to him; "but I forgive thee, and I would fain, even though I should deceive myself, endeavour to fancy that this lovely girl has some affection for me. Go to the queen; tell her that one of her shepherdesses possesses a wonderful secret which may cure me. Obtain permission to bring her hither. Run, fly, Mirtain! minutes will appear ages to me!"

The queen had never seen the shepherdess of whom Mirtain spoke; and answered that she had no faith in the knowledge affected by such ignorant little girls: and that it was mere folly to think of it. "It is certain, madam," said he, "that one may sometimes find more relief from the application of simples than from all that is contained in the pages of Esculapius. The prince suffers so much that he is anxious to test the effect of what this young girl proposes." "Be it so," said the queen; "but if she do not cure him, I will punish her so severely, that she will never have the audacity to boast of her pretended remedies again." Mirtain returned to his master, and informed him of the queen's ill-humour, and that he feared the result of it to Constancia. "I would rather die!" exclaimed the prince. "Return instantly; tell my mother, I intreat her to let that lovely girl remain with her innocent sheep. What a recompense is this," he continued, "for the trouble she would take! The very idea of it redoubles my disorder."

Mirtain ran to the queen, to beg her, in the prince's name, not to send for Constancia;

but as she was naturally very hasty, she flew into a passion at his vacillation. "I have already sent for her," said the queen: "if she cure my son I will make her some present; if she fail, I know what I have to do. Return to him, and endeavour to amuse him; the state of melancholy he is in distracts me." Mirtain obeyed her commands, and took care not to tell his master the temper the queen was in, for his anxiety about his shepherdess might have killed him.

The royal pastures were so near the city that she was not long coming, let alone the impulse she received from a passion which generally increases one's speed. As soon as she reached the palace, the queen was informed of her arrival; but she did not condescend to see her; she contented herself with ordering her to be told to take care what she was about: for that if she failed to cure the prince, she would have her sewn up in a sack and flung into the river. At this threat, the beautiful princess turned pale, and felt her blood run cold. "Alas," said she to herself, "I well deserve this punishment. I spoke falsely when I boasted of my skill; and my desire to see Constancio was too unreasonable to secure me the protection of the gods." She hung her head, and her tears flowed down her cheeks in silence.

The standers-by admired her greatly. She appeared to them more like an angel from Heaven than a mortal maiden. "What are you afraid of, lovely shepheress?" said they to her. "Your eyes have in them the power of life and death; one glance of them may preserve our young prince. Come to his apartment, dry your tears, and administer your remedy without alarm."

The manner in which they spoke to her, and the extreme desire she had to see the prince, gave her fresh confidence. She begged to be allowed to go into the garden, that she might herself cull the simples she required. She gathered myrtle, trefoil, and other herbs and flowers, some of which are dedicated to Cupid, and some to his mother; and added to them some doves' feathers, and a few drops of pigeons' blood. She invoked the aid of all the gods and fairies, then, trembling more than a turtle-dove at the sight of a falcon, she told them she was ready to be led to the prince's chamber. He was in bed; his face pallid, and his sight feeble; but the moment he saw her his complexion improved; which she observed to her great joy.

"My lord," said she, "I have for many days past offered up my prayers for the restoration of your health. My anxiety even induced me to tell one of your shepherds that I knew some little remedies, and that I would most willingly endeavour to assuage your pains; but the queen has sent me notice, that if Heaven does not assist my undertaking, and you should not be cured, I am to be drowned. Imagine, my lord, the alarming situation I am placed in; but be assured that I am interested in your preservation more on your account than on mine." "Fear nothing, charming shepherdess," said he; "the kind interest you take in my life will render it so dear to me, that I will take greater care of it. I had ceased to prize existence: alas! could I be happy under the recollection of the sentiments I heard you express for Constancio? Those fatal verses, and your coldness, have reduced me to the wretched state in which

you see me; but, lovely shepherdess, you have desired me to live! Let me live then, and live but for you!"

Constancia had much difficulty in concealing the pleasure this flattering declaration gave her. Fearing that somebody might be listening to what the prince was saying to her, she interrupted him by asking if he would permit her to put on some bandages of the herbs she had gathered. He stretched his arms out to her with so much tenderness of expression that she hastily bound on one of the bandages, in order that nobody should perceive what was passing between them, and having gone through several little ceremonies, the better to impose on the prince's attendants, he exclaimed, after a few minutes, that he felt in less pain. It was quite true; he did. The physicians were summoned, and were surprised at the efficacy of the remedy and the promptitude of its effects; but when they saw the shepherdess who had applied it they ceased to wonder at anything, and said to one another in their own jargon, that one of her looks was a more powerful dose than any in the whole pharmacopœia.

The shepherdess was so little affected by all the praises they lavished on her, that those who did not know her took for stupidity what arose from a very different cause. She crept into a corner of the room, concealing herself from everybody but her patient, whom she approached occasionally to press his forehead or feel his pulse; and in these brief moments they said to each other a thousand charming things with which the heart had much more to do than the head. "I trust, my lord," said she, "that the sack which the queen has ordered for me to be drowned in will not be required for so fatal a purpose. Your health, which is so precious to me, is undoubtedly improving." "It depends wholly upon you, lovely Constancia!" he replied; "a share in your heart can do everything for my peace, and the preservation of my life."

The prince arose, and repaired to the queen's apartment. When he was announced she would not believe it; she advanced hastily, and was struck with astonishment at seeing him at her chamber-door. "What! Is it you, my son? my dear son!" she exclaimed. "To whom am I indebted for this marvellous resurrection?" "You owe it to your own kindness, madam," said the prince; "you have sent to me the most skilful person in the world; I beseech you to reward her in proportion to the service she has rendered me!" "There is no hurry for that," said the queen sharply; "she is a poor shepherdess, who will think herself too happy in being still permitted to tend my sheep."

At this moment the king arrived. They had been to tell him the good news of the prince's recovery; and as he was proceeding towards the queen's apartments, he caught sight of Constancia: her beauty, brilliant as the sun with its countless rays, dazzled him to such an extent, that he stood some few moments without the power of asking those who were near him who that wonderful creature was, and how long goddesses had taken up their abode in his palace. At length, recovering himself, he approached her, and learning that she was the enchantress who had cured his son, he embraced her, and politely said that he felt very ill himself, and requested she would cure him also.

He entered the queen's apartments, followed by Constancia. The queen had never

seen her before. Her astonishment cannot be described. She uttered a loud shriek and fainted; casting, as she fell, a look of fury on the shepherdess. Constancio and Constancia were terrified at this event; the king knew not how to account for so sudden a seizure; all the court was in consternation. At length the queen returned to herself; and the king pressed her to tell him what she had seen to affect her in so extraordinary a manner. She dissembled her vexation, and said it was a fit of the vapours; but the prince, who knew her well, was exceedingly uneasy. She spoke to the shepherdess with some degree of kindness; telling her that she would retain her near her person, and give her the care of the flowers in her private garden. The princess was delighted to think she should remain where she could see Constancio every day.

The king, however, induced the queen to enter his cabinet, and then tenderly inquired what had occurred to vex her. "Ah, sire," she exclaimed, "I have had a frightful dream. I had never seen this young shepherdess, when my imagination portrayed her to me so faithfully, that the instant I cast my eyes upon her I recognised the features. I thought she was married to my son. I am much deceived if this wretched country girl does not cause me a great deal of sorrow." "You place too much trust in things the most delusive in the world," said the king. "I advise you not to act from such motives. Send this shepherdess back to tend your flocks again, and do not afflict yourself unseasonably."

The king's advice was by no means agreeable to the queen; far from following it, she thought of nothing but how to discover her son's sentiments for Constancia.

The prince lost no opportunity of seeing her. As she had charge of the flowers, she was frequently in the garden, watering them; and it seemed as if they became more brilliant and beautiful when she touched them. Ruson was still her companion; she talked to him sometimes about the prince, although he could not understand her; and when Constancio himself accosted her, she was so embarrassed, that her eyes sufficiently betrayed to him the secret of her heart. He was enchanted, and said everything to her that the tenderest passion could dictate.

The queen, on the strength of her dream, and still more on account of Constancia's incomparable beauty, became so uneasy she could no longer sleep in peace. She rose before daybreak; she hid herself behind the palisades, sometimes in the recesses of a grotto, to overhear what her son said to that beautiful girl; but they were both prudent enough to speak so low, that she could only act upon suspicion. This but increased her anxiety; she looked on the prince with perfect contempt, thinking day and night that he would place that shepherdess on the throne.

Constancio was as guarded as he possibly could be: but in spite of all he could do, everybody perceived he loved Constancia; and whether he praised her naturally because he admired her, or pretended to find fault with her, in either case he spoke like an interested person. Constancia, on her side, could not refrain from talking of the prince to her companions, and as she often sang songs which she had made about him, the queen, who heard her, was no less surprised at her admirable voice than at the

subject of the verses. "Just Heaven!" she exclaimed; "what have I done that I should be punished in the most cruel way to me in the world? Alas! I had intended my son for my niece; and to my desperate annoyance, I perceive he has attached himself to a wretched shepherdess, who will, perhaps, excite him to rebel against my pleasure."

While she was thus distressing herself, and forming a thousand schemes in her fury to punish Constancia for being so beautiful, so charming, love was unremittingly making fresh progress in the hearts of the young couple. Constancia, convinced of the prince's sincerity, could no longer conceal from him her rank or her affection. So tender an avowal, and such a proof of confidence, enraptured him to such an extent, that anywhere but in the queen's garden he would have cast himself at her feet to thank her. It was not without difficulty he restrained himself even there. He ceased to struggle with his passion. He had loved the shepherdess Constancia: it is easy to imagine that he adored her when he was informed of her rank, and if he was easily persuaded of the truth of so extraordinary a thing (as it appears to us) of a great princess wandering about the world, by turns a shepherdess and a gardener, it was simply because, in those days, such adventures were common enough; and that he discovered something in her air and manners that warranted to him the truth of her story. Constancio, moved by love and respect, swore eternal fidelity to the princess, and she vowed no less to him. They agreed that their marriage should take place as soon as they could obtain the consent of the persons on whom they depended. The queen observed their growing passion; her confidante, who sought as eagerly as herself to discover something which might gain her favour with her mistress, came to her one day with the information, that Constancia sent Ruson every morning to the prince's apartment. That the little ram carried two baskets which she had filled with flowers, and that Mirtain was his conductor. The queen at this news lost all patience; she saw Ruson pass; she ran and lay in wait for him herself, and despite the prayers of Mirtain, she dragged the ram to her own chamber, tore the baskets and flowers to pieces, and examined them so narrowly that she discovered, in a large carnation that was not fully blown, a little scrap of paper which Constancia had inserted with much ingenuity. In it she had reproached the prince tenderly with the perils to which he daily exposed himself in hunting. The note contained these lines:—

"'Midst all my joy, I tremble with alarm
To see thee daily to the chase repair.
O heaven! wherein consists the wondrous charm
Of tracking savage monsters to their lair?
Leave the gaunt lion, and the grisly bear,
And turn to conquer in a sweeter field—
The tender heart that but desires to yield."

Whilst the queen was raving against the shepherdess, Mirtain had hastened to inform his master of the unfortunate adventure of the ram. The prince very uneasy ran to his mother's apartment, but she had already gone to the king's. "Behold, my liege," said she, "behold the noble inclinations of your son; he loves this miserable shepherdess,

who persuaded us she knew a certain cure for his malady. Alas! she knew one but too well. In short," continued she, "it is love that instructed her. She has restored him to health only to inflict on him greater evils; and if we do not take immediate steps to ward off the misfortunes that threaten us, my dream will prove but too true." "You are naturally severe," said the king, "you expected that your son would think of no one but the princess you had selected for him. It was not so easy a thing to do. You must make some allowance for his youth." "I cannot endure your prepossession in his favour," cried the queen; "you can never find fault with him. All I ask of you, sir, is to consent to his being removed from court for a short time. Absence will have more effect on him than all my arguments."

The king hated contention; he acceded to everything his wife desired, and she returned immediately to her own apartments.

She found the prince there; he was awaiting her in the utmost anxiety. "My son," said she to him, before he could say a word to her, "the king has just shown me letters from the king my brother, begging him to send you to his court, in order that you may become acquainted with the princess who has been destined to you from infancy, and also that she may have a similar advantage. Is it not just that you should be allowed an opportunity of forming your own opinion of her merits, and that you should love her before you are united to each other for ever?" "I have no right to desire that special rules should be made in my favour," said the prince. "It is not customary for royal personages to visit each other, and consult their own hearts in preference to the reasons of state which render it necessary for them to contract a certain alliance. The lady you have selected for me may be beautiful or ugly, intelligent or stupid; I shall obey you in either case." "I understand thee, wretch!" cried the queen, flying out suddenly; "I understand thee! Thou adorest a worthless shepherdess; thou fearest leaving her. Thou shalt leave her, or I will have her despatched before thine eyes! But if thou wilt depart without hesitation, and strive to forget her, I will retain her near my person, and love her as much as I now hate her."

The prince, as pale as if he were about to die, consulted in his own mind what course he should take. On each hand he could see nothing but frightful agony. He knew his mother to be the most cruel and vindictive queen in the world. He feared resistance would irritate her, and that the consequences would fall upon his dear mistress. At length, pressed by the queen to say whether he would go or not, he consented to do so, with the same feeling that a man consents to drink the glass of poison that is to destroy him.

He had scarcely given her his word that he would depart, when, leaving his mother's chamber, he entered his own, his heart so wrung that he thought it would break. He confided his affliction to the faithful Mirtain; and, impatient to inform Constancia, he went in search of her. She was in the deepest part of a grotto, where she occasionally took refuge when the heat of the sun was too powerful for her in the garden. There was a little bank of turf by the side of a streamlet, which

fell from the top of a rock of shell-work. In this peaceful retreat she unbound the tresses of her hair; they were fair as silver, finer than silk, and all in wavy curls. She sat with her naked feet in the water, the agreeable murmur of which, together with the fatigue of gardening, insensibly lulled her into a sweet sleep. Though her eyes were closed, they had still a thousand attractions; their long black lashes gave more brilliancy to the whiteness of her skin; the loves and graces seemed to hover around her, and modesty and gentleness added to the charm of her beauty.

'Twas there the enamoured prince found her. He recollected that the first time he had seen her she was thus asleep; but the sentiments she had since inspired him with had become so tender, that he would willingly have given half his life to pass the other half beside her. He gazed on her some time with a pleasure that suspended his grief; his eyes, running eagerly over her charms, rested on her foot, whiter than snow: he felt he could never cease admiring it. He knelt, and took her hand; she woke instantly, appeared vexed that he had seen her feet, and hid them, blushing like a rose, as it opens to the dawning day.

Alas! how soon did that beautiful colour fade! She remarked an unwonted melancholy in the countenance of the prince. "What ails you, my lord?" she inquired, with much alarm. "I can tell by your eyes that you are in some affliction." "Ah, who would not be so, dearest princess," said he to her, shedding tears which he had not the power to suppress; "they are about to part us! I must either leave, or expose you to all the fury of the queen. She knows of my attachment to you; she has even seen the note you wrote to me—one of her women assures me so—and without the least consideration for my anguish, she cruelly insists on my immediate departure for the court of the king her brother." "What do you tell me, prince?" exclaimed Constancia; "you are on the point of forsaking me, and you believe that to be necessary for the preservation of my life! Can you possibly entertain such an idea? Let me perish before your eyes; I shall be less to be pitied than if I am condemned to live without you."

So affecting a conversation could not fail of being often interrupted by sobs and tears. Those young lovers had never yet endured the pangs of absence; they had never foreseen such a misfortune, and this gave additional weight to the blow which had fallen upon them. They exchanged a thousand vows of eternal fidelity. The prince promised Constancia to return with the greatest speed. "I go," said he, "but to affront my uncle and his daughter, so that they shall abandon all idea of giving her to me for a wife. I will do everything to disgust the princess, and I shall succeed in my object." "You must not show yourself, then," said Constancia, "or you will please her, do what you will to prevent it." They both wept so bitterly, gazed on each other so mournfully, interchanged such passionate promises, that their only consolation was the perfect confidence they had in each other's affection, and that nothing could ever alter such deep and tender feelings.

The time had passed so rapidly in this sweet conversation, that night had already

closed around them before they thought of separating; but the queen, wishing to consult the prince respecting the equipage he would require, Mirtain hastened in search of him. He found him still at the feet of his mistress, holding her hand in both of his. When they perceived him, they were seized with such apprehensions that they could scarcely speak. He told his master that the queen was asking for him. Her commands might not be disobeyed. The princess retired alone through another part of the gardens.

The queen found the prince so melancholy and altered, that she easily divined the cause. She would not speak to him any more on the subject; it was enough that he should depart. In short, everything was prepared with so much diligence, that it seemed as if the fairies had had a hand in it. As to the prince, he occupied himself only with what related to his passion. He desired Mirtain to remain at court, and send him daily news of the princess. He left with him his finest jewels, in case he should be in want of funds; and his foresight neglected nothing in a matter of such moment to him.

At last he was compelled to go. The despair of our young lovers cannot be described. Constancia then first comprehended the whole extent of her misfortune. To be a king's daughter, rightful owner of immense dominions, and to languish in the power of a cruel queen, who banished her son for fear of his affection for her—a princess who was his equal every way, and whose hand would be ardently desired by the greatest sovereigns in the world! But her star had decided it should be so.

The queen, delighted at the absence of her son, thought only of intercepting the letters that might be written to him. She succeeded, and discovered that Mirtain was his confidant. She had him arrested on some false pretence, and sent to a fortress, where he was subjected to a strict imprisonment. The prince was greatly incensed at this news. He wrote to the king and queen demanding the release of his favourite. His applications had no effect: but it was not only by this that they sought to distress him.

One morning that the princess had risen with the dawn, and gone into the garden to gather flowers as usual for the queen's toilet, she saw the faithful Ruson, who was preceding her at some distance, suddenly run back in great alarm. As she advanced to see what had frightened him so much, he pulled her by the skirt of her gown in order to prevent her, for he was a most intelligent animal, and she suddenly heard the sharp hissing of a number of serpents, and found herself almost immediately beset by toads, vipers, scorpions, asps, and snakes, that encircled, without stinging her. They raised themselves to dart at her, but invariably fell back on the spot without power to touch her.

Notwithstanding the terror she was in, she could not fail to notice this prodigy, and she could attribute it to nothing except the virtue of a ring made under the influence of certain constellations, and given to her by her lover. Whichever way she turned, she saw these venomous reptiles running towards her. The walks were full of them, and they swarmed upon the flowers and under the trees. The lovely Constancia knew not what to do. She perceived the queen at her window, laughing at her alarm. She knew

directly that she had no hope of being saved by her orders. "I must die," said she nobly: "those horrid monsters that surround me came not here of their own accord. The queen has had them brought hither, and there she stands to be the spectatress of this miserable termination to my existence. It has certainly been so sad a one up to this very hour, that I have no reason to cling to it; and if I regret its loss, the gods, the just gods, can testify why I do so at this moment."

Having thus spoken, she advanced, and all the snakes and their companions retreated as fast as she approached them. She quitted the garden in this way unhurt, as much to her own astonishment as to the queen's, who had for a long time past been collecting these dangerous reptiles with the intention of having the shepherdess stung to death by them. She imagined such a circumstance would not arouse the suspicions of her son; that he would attribute Constancia's death to a natural cause, and that she should escape his reproaches: but her project having failed, she had recourse to another expedient.

At the other end of the forest there dwelt a fairy whose abode was inaccessible, for she was guarded by elephants that unceasingly roamed round the forest, and devoured the poor travellers, their horses, and even the iron the latter were shod with, so insatiable was their appetite. The queen had come to an agreement with her, that if by some unheard-of chance, any one in the queen's name should reach the fairy's palace alive, she would give the messenger something fatal to take back to her.

The queen sent for Constancia: gave her her orders, and told her to set out immediately. She had heard all her companions talk of the danger there was in passing through that forest; and an old shepherdess had even told her how she had fortunately escaped by the aid of a little sheep she had taken with her, for, furious as the elephants may be, the moment they see a lamb they become as gentle themselves. The same shepherdess had also told her, that being ordered to take a burning girdle back to the queen, under the apprehension that she would make her put it on, she put it round several trees which were all consumed by it, so that the girdle at last had no power to hurt her, as the queen had hoped it would.

When the princess listened to this story she little thought it would be, one day, of such service to her: but when the queen had issued her commands with so imperative an air that the sentence was evidently irrevocable, she prayed the gods to assist her. She took Ruson with her, and departed for the perilous forest. The queen was enchanted: "We shall see her no more!" said she to the king. "This odious object of our son's attachment! I have sent her to a spot where a thousand such as she would not be sufficient to make a quarter of a breakfast for the elephants." The king told her she was too vindictive, and that he could not help regretting the destruction of the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. "Indeed!" replied the queen. "I advise you to fall in love with her then, and weep for her death as the unworthy Constancio does for her absence!"

Constancia had scarcely entered the forest when she saw herself surrounded by

elephants. These colossal monsters, delighted at the sight of the beautiful ram, who walked with a much bolder step than his mistress, caressed him as gently with their formidable trunks as a lady could have done with her hand. The princess was so afraid that the elephants would make a distinction between her and Ruson, that she took him up in her arms, although he had already become rather heavy, and whichever way the turned took care to present him to the monsters, and in this manner made the best of her way towards the palace of the inaccessible old fairy.

She reached it at length, after much alarm and trouble: the place seemed very untidy; the fairy who inhabited it was no less so. She could not entirely conceal her astonishment at seeing Constancia, for it was a long time since any living creature had succeeded in arriving there. "What is your will, fair child?" said the fairy to her. The princess humbly presented to her the queen's compliments, accompanied by the request that she would send her the girdle of friendship. "She shall not be denied," said the fairy; "no doubt it is for you she desires it." "I do not know that, madam," replied Constancia. "Oh, but I know it well enough," said the fairy; and taking out of her casket a girdle of blue velvet, with long cords attached to it, on which to hang a purse, a knife, and a pair of scissors, she presented her with the handsome ornament. "Take it," said she, "this girdle will render you perfectly charming, provided you put it on as soon as you are in the forest."

After Constancia had thanked, and taken leave of her, she caught up Ruson in her arms again, who was of more consequence to her than ever. The elephants made much of him, and let her pass freely, notwithstanding their voracious propensities. She did not forget to put the girdle round a tree, which began to burn immediately, as if it had been in the fiercest fire in the world. She took the girdle off again, and put it on another tree, and so, from tree to tree, until it ceased to ignite them. At length she reached the palace very much fatigued.

"When the queen saw her, she was so struck with astonishment that she could not hold her peace. "You are a cheat!" she cried; "you have not been to my friend, the fairy!" "Pardon me, madam!" replied the fair Constancia. "I am the bearer of the girdle of friendship, which I requested her to give me in your name." "Have you not put it on?" asked the queen. "It is too fine for a poor shepherdess like me," replied Constancia. "No, no," said the queen, "I give it you for your trouble; do not omit to wear it: but, tell me, what did you see on your road?" "I saw," she replied, "some elephants, who were so intelligent, and displayed so much ingenuity, that there is not a country in the world where they would not excite admiration. It seems that forest is their kingdom, and that there are in it some that rule the rest." The queen was greatly mortified, and did not say all she thought, but she was still in hopes that nothing on earth would prevent the girdle from burning the princess. "Though the elephants have spared thee," she muttered to herself, "the girdle will avenge me! Thou shalt see, wretch, the friendship I bear thee, and the reward due to thee for having fascinated my son."

Constancia had retired to her little chamber, where she wept the absence of her dear prince. She dared not write to him, for the queen had spies abroad who stopped the couriers, and she had already, by these means, intercepted her son's letters. "Alas! Constancio," said she, "you will shortly receive sad tidings of me. You ought not to have gone and abandoned me to the fury of your mother! You might have protected me, or you would have received my last sigh in lieu of my being delivered over to her tyrannical power, and bereft of every consolation!" She went to her work in the garden at daybreak as usual; she found in it still a thousand venomous reptiles, from which, however, her ring preserved her. She had put on the blue velvet girdle, and when the queen saw her gathering flowers as calmly as if she had only a thread round her waist, nothing had ever equalled her vexation. "What mysterious power interests itself for this shepherdess!" cried she; "she bewitches my son by her beauty, and restores him to health by the application of innocent simples. Snakes and asps crawl at her feet without stinging her. The wild elephants become gentle and kind at her sight. The fairy-girdle, which should have reduced her to ashes, serves but to adorn her. I must have recourse, then, to more certain remedies."

She sent immediately the captain of her guard, in whom she placed great confidence, down to the harbour, to see if there were not any ships ready to sail for very distant parts. He found one that was to sail at nightfall. The queen was greatly delighted at this, and had a proposal made to the master, to sell him the most beautiful slave in the world. The merchant was enchanted; he came to the palace and was shown poor Constancia in the garden without her being in the least aware of it. He was struck with astonishment at the beauty of that incomparable girl; and the queen, who knew well how to make a good bargain, for she was very avaricious, sold her to him at an exceedingly high price.

Constancia, ignorant of the fresh misfortunes that were in store for her, retired early to her little chamber to have the pleasure of thinking undisturbed of Constancio, and of answering one of his letters which she had at last contrived to receive. She was reading it over and over again, unable to desist from so agreeable an occupation, when she saw the queen enter the room. She had a key which opened all the locks in the palace. She was followed by two mutes and the captain of the guard. The mutes stuffed a handkerchief into Constancia's mouth, bound her hands, and carried her off. Ruson tried to follow his dear mistress; the queen flung herself on him and held him fast; for she feared his bleating would be heard, and she wished the whole affair to be conducted with the greatest silence and secrecy. Constancia, therefore, finding no help, was carried on board the vessel; and, as they only waited for her, they put to sea immediately.

We must leave her on her voyage. Such was her sad fate, for the sovereign fairy had not been able to move destiny in her favour, and all she could do was to follow her everywhere in a thick cloud, invisible to mortal eyes. In the meanwhile, Prince Constancio, engrossed by his passion, kept no terms with the princess they had chosen

for him. Though he was naturally the most courteous of men, he was continually so rude to her that she often complained of him to her father, who could not avoid quarrelling with his nephew about it, so that the marriage was postponed almost indefinitely. When the queen thought proper to write to the prince that Constancia was dangerously ill, his anguish was inexpressible. He could not stand any longer on ceremony in a matter which affected his life as much as that of his mistress, and therefore returned home with the speed of lightning. Notwithstanding all his exertion, however, he arrived too late. The queen, who had foreseen his return, had circulated a report some days previously that Constancia was ill. She placed in her apartments women who knew when to speak and when to be silent according to their instructions. The rumour of Constancia's death was then spread abroad, and a wax figure was finally buried as the body of that unfortunate girl. The queen, who left no means unemployed to convince the prince of the truth of this story, released Mirtain from prison, that he might attend the funeral; so that the day for that ceremony being publicly announced, everybody came to lament the loss of that charming girl, and the queen, who could throw any expression into her features she chose, pretended to feel this loss deeply on her son's account.

He reached the city in the greatest anxiety that can be imagined, and on entering it, could not resist asking the first persons he met, the news about his beloved Constancia. Those who answered him did not know who he was, and without the slightest preparation told him she was dead. At these fatal words he was no longer master of his emotion. He fell from his horse speechless, pulseless. A crowd gathered round him —they discovered that it was the prince; everybody pressed to assist him, and they carried him almost dead to the palace.

The king was greatly affected by the deplorable state of his son. The queen had prepared herself for such an event, and thought that time and the extinction of his fond hopes would cure him; but he was too deeply smitten to be so easily consoled. His distress, far from diminishing, increased every minute. He passed two days without seeing or speaking to any one. He then went to the queen's apartments, his eyes full of tears, his looks wild, his face pale. He told her it was she who had been the death of his dear Constancia; but that she would be speedily punished, as he could not survive the loss of his beloved, and that he desired to be shown the place where they had buried her.

The queen, not being able to combat this resolution, determined to conduct him herself to a cypress grove, in which she had caused a tomb to be erected. When the prince fancied himself at the spot where his mistress reposed in death, he uttered such tender and passionate expressions that no one has ever spoken so touchingly. Even the hard-hearted queen could not help melting into tears. Mirtain was as much afflicted as his master; and all who heard him sympathised in his despair. All on a sudden, in a fit of frenzy he drew his sword, and approaching the marble which he believed covered the beautiful body of Constancia, he would have slain himself if the

queen and Mirtain had not caught his arm. "No!" said he, "nothing in the world shall prevent my rejoining in death my dear Princess!" The title of princess which he gave to the shepherdess surprised the queen. She fancied her son was raving, and would have thought he had lost his senses completely if in all other respects he had not expressed himself rationally.

She asked him wherefore he called Constancia a princess. He replied, that she was so; that her kingdom was called the Kingdom of Deserts; that she was the sole heir to it; and that he should never have named it but that there were no longer any reasons for secrecy. "Alas, my son!" said the queen, "since Constancia is of equal rank with yourself, be comforted, for she is not dead. I will confess to you, in order to appease your sorrow, that I sold her to some merchants, who have carried her off as a slave." "Ah!" said the prince, "you tell me this to shake the resolution I have made to die, but my mind is made up, and nothing can change it." "Then," said the queen, "your own eyes must convince you;" and thereupon she ordered them to dig up the waxen figure. As at first sight he took it to be the body of his charming princess he fell into a deep swoon, from which they had great difficulty in recovering him. The queen in vain assured him that Constancia was not dead. After the wicked trick she had played him he would not believe her: but Mirtain succeeded in persuading him of the fact. He knew his attachment to him, and that he was not capable of telling him a falsehood.

He felt in some degree relieved, for of all misfortunes her death appeared to him the most terrible, and he could now flatter himself with the hope of seeing his mistress once again. But where should he seek her? The merchants who had bought her were strangers; they had not said whither they were bound. These were great difficulties: but there are few which true love cannot surmount. He preferred perishing in the attempt to recover his mistress to living without her.

He heaped a thousand reproaches on the queen for her implacable hatred. He added that she would have time to repent the cruel trick she had played him; that he was about to leave her, never to return; so that in plotting the loss of one she had lost both. The afflicted mother threw herself on her son's neck, bathed him with her tears, and conjured him by the grey hairs of his father, and the love that she bore him, not to abandon them; that if he deprived them of the consolation of seeing him he would be the cause of their death; that he was their only hope, and if he failed them, the neighbouring princes, who were their enemies, would seize upon the king. The prince listened to her coldly and respectfully: but he had always before his eyes her harsh treatment of Constancia, without whom all the kingdoms of the earth had no temptations for him: so that he persisted with astonishing firmness in his resolution to depart the following morning.

The king strove in vain to detain him. He passed the night in giving directions to Mirtain; he confided to his care the faithful ram. He took a great number of jewels, and told Mirtain to keep the rest, and that he would be the only person to whom he

would write, and that only on condition that he spoke of him to no one, as he was determined to make his mother suffer all the anxiety about him that was possible.

Day had not dawned before the impatient Constancio was on horseback, trusting to fortune, and praying her to assist him to recover his mistress. He knew not what road to take, but as he understood she had been carried off in a ship, he thought the best way to find her was to go on board one also. He made all speed, therefore, to the most noted port, and without a single attendant, and unknown to every one, he set about informing himself which was the most distant country he could get a passage to, and what coasts, roads, and harbours the vessel could touch at or put into on its voyage. After which he embarked with the hope, that so strong and pure a passion as that which he cherished could not always be an unfortunate one. As soon as they saw land, he took the ship's boat and rowed along the coast, shouting, "Constancia! fair Constancia! where are you? I seek for you, and call on you in vain! How much longer must we be separated?" His lamentations and complaints were wasted on the empty air. He returned to the ship, his heart pierced with grief, and his eyes full of tears.

One evening, that they had cast anchor under a great rock, he landed as usual on the beach; but as the country was unknown, and the night very dark, those who accompanied him refused to advance far inland, fearing they might perish there. The prince, who cared little for his life, however, set forward, falling and scrambling up again a hundred times; at length he perceived a great light, which appeared to proceed from some fire. As he approached he heard much noise, and the sound of hammers, which seemed to be giving tremendous blows. Far from feeling alarmed, he hastened onwards, and came to a large forge, open on all sides, and in which there was a furnace glowing so intensely, that it seemed as if the sun was blazing in the centre of it; thirty giants, each with only one eye in the middle of his forehead, were at work fabricating armour and weapons.

Constancio approached, and said to them, "If you can feel compassion, amongst all the iron and fire that surround you; if, by accident, you have seen the fair Constancia, who has been carried off as a slave by some merchants, who land on this coast, tell me where I can find her, and ask all I possess in the world, I will give it you with pleasure." He had scarcely finished his little oration, when the noise, which had ceased on his appearance, recommenced louder than ever. "Alas!" said he, "my sorrow moves ye not! Barbarians! I have nothing to hope from you!"

He was turning away, when he heard a sweet symphony which enchanted him; and looking towards the furnace he saw, issuing from it, the most beautiful boy that imagination could picture; he was more brilliant than the fire out of which he came. As soon as Constancio had remarked his charms, the bandage that covered his eyes, the bow and arrows that he bore, he felt sure it was Cupid; and so, in fact, it was, who called to him: "Stay, Constancio! thou burnest with too pure a flame for me to refuse thee my assistance. I am virtuous love. It was I who wounded thee for the fair Constancia, and it is I who now defend her from the giant who persecutes her. The sovereign fairy

is my most intimate friend: we have combined our powers to preserve Constancia for thee, but I must try the strength of thy passion before I reveal to thee where she is." "Command, love! Command what thou wilt," exclaimed the prince; "there is nothing in which I will not obey thee." "Fling thyself into this fire," replied the boy, "and remember, that if thou lovest not truly, and one alone, thou art lost." "I have no reason to fear," said Constancio, throwing himself instantly into the furnace. All sensation left him; he knew not where or what he was.

He remained in this trance for thirty hours, and on awaking found himself the most beautiful pigeon in the world. Instead of being in a horrible furnace, he was lying in a little nest of roses, jasmines, and honeysuckles. He was as much surprised as anybody could be; his rough feet, the various colours of his feathers, and his fiery red eyes, astonished him exceedingly. He saw himself in a rivulet; and when he attempted to complain of his sad fate, he found he had lost the use of speech, though he had retained the power of thought.

He looked upon this transformation as the greatest of all misfortunes. "Oh, perfidious love!" said he, in his own mind; "is this the reward thou hast bestowed on the truest of lovers? Must one be fickle, treacherous, and perjured, to find favour in thy sight? I have seen many such whom thou hast crowned with triumph, whilst thou heapest affliction on the really faithful. What hope remains for me under such a form as this? Behold me, a pigeon! Could I but speak as the blue bird did of yore, and whose story I have always delighted in, I would fly high and low, near and far, through every region, in search of my beloved mistress, and question every mortal creature till I found her; but I have not the power even to pronounce her name, and the only remedy left me for my misfortunes is to precipitate myself into some abyss, and end them with my life." Full of his fatal design, he flew to the top of a high mountain, from which he endeavoured to cast himself down: but his wings sustained him in spite of himself. He was astonished at this; for, having never been a pigeon before, he was not aware of the undesired help his pinions would afford him. He took the resolution, therefore, of pulling out all his feathers, and began at once to pluck himself without mercy.

In this bare state he was about to try another somersault from the crest of a rock, when two girls came suddenly upon him. The moment they saw this unfortunate bird one said to the other, "Where can this unhappy pigeon have come from? Has it just escaped from the sharp talons of some bird of prey, or out of the jaws of a weasel?" "I don't know where it comes from," replied the younger girl; "but I know where it will go to;" and advancing upon the quiet little creature, "it will go," she continued, "to keep company with five others that I mean to make a pie of for the fairy sovereign." Prince pigeon, hearing her speak thus, far from attempting to escape, came towards her in the hope that she would do him the favour to kill him directly: but, instead of causing his death, it saved his life; for the girls found him so tame and prettily mannered, that they determined to make a pet of him. The handsomest put him into a covered basket, in which she usually carried her work, and they continued their walk.

"For some days past," said one of them, "our mistress has seemed to be very busy; she is continually mounting her fiery camel, and flies night and day from pole to pole without stopping." "If thou wert to be trusted with a secret," replied her companion, "I would tell thee the reason, for she has chosen to make me her confidante." "Do, and I will be dumb," cried she who had first spoken; "rest assured of my keeping the secret." "Know, then," rejoined the other, "that her Princess Constancia, whom she is so fond of, is persecuted by a giant who would marry her. He has shut her up in a tower, and to prevent his forcing her into this match, the fairy must do some wonderful things."

The prince listened to their conversation as he sat in the bottom of the basket. He had thought, up to that moment, nothing could increase his misfortunes; but he felt, with the keenest grief, that he had much deceived himself; and one can easily imagine so after all I have said of his passion, and from the position in which he found himself. To have become a pigeon at the very moment when his assistance was so necessary to the princess plunged him into perfect despair. His imagination, ingenious in tormenting him, pictured to him Constancia in the fatal tower, subjected to the importunities, the violences, and the fury, of a dreadful giant; he feared her courage would fail her, and that she would give her consent to the marriage. The next moment, his fear was, that she would brave him and lose her life from the rage of such a lover! It would be difficult to describe the condition the poor prince was in.

The young person, who carried him in her little basket, having returned with her companion to the palace of the fairy, whose servants they were, found their mistress walking in a shady avenue in her garden. They first knelt at her feet, and then said, "Great queen, here is a pigeon we have found: it is gentle and tame, and if it had feathers would be very handsome; we have determined to bring it up in our own room; but if agreeable to you it shall be sent occasionally to yours, to amuse you." The fairy took the basket in which the bird was confined, drew it out, and made some serious observations on worldly grandeur: for it was extraordinary to see such a prince as Constancio under the form of a pigeon ready to be stewed or roasted; and, although it was she herself who had up to that time arranged the whole affair, and that nothing had happened but by her orders, she was addicted to moralising on all that occurred, and this incident made a great impression upon her. She caressed the little pigeon, and he neglected nothing, on his part, to attract her attention in order to induce her to alleviate the misery he suffered from this sad adventure. He made her a low bow, after the fashion of a pigeon, drawing back one of his feet a little. He billed and cooed affectionately, and though but a novice, proved himself already as clever at it as the oldest ring-dove or wood-pigeon in the country.

The sovereign fairy carried him into her cabinet, shut the door, and said to him, "Prince, the sad condition in which I now see thee does not prevent my recognising and loving thee for the sake of my daughter Constancia, who fully returns thy affection.

Blame no one but me for thy transformation. I caused thee to enter the furnace to try the truth of thy love; it is pure, it is ardent. I give thee full credit for an act that redounds to thine honour." The pigeon bowed three times in token of his gratitude, and listened attentively to what the fairy said to him.

"The queen, thy mother," continued she, "had scarcely received the money and jewels given her in exchange for the princess, than she had her taken by force to the merchants, who had bought her, and as soon as they had her on board they set sail for the Indies, where they were certain to make a fine profit by the precious gem they had obtained possession of. Her tears and prayers could not alter their determination. In vain she assured them that Prince Constancio would ransom her with all he possessed in the world; the more she convinced them of the value he set upon her, the greater was the speed they made in the fear that he would be informed of her abduction, and that he would overtake and snatch from them their prey. At length, after having sailed half over the globe, they encountered a terrific storm: the princess, overwhelmed by her grief, and the effects of her voyage, was almost dying. They feared they should lose her, and took refuge in the nearest port; but as they were landing they saw approaching them a giant of the most tremendous size. He was followed by several others, who all cried out in a breath, that they wanted to see what curiosities were on board the ship. The first thing that struck the giant's sight, on stepping aboard, was the young princess. They knew each other again immediately. 'Hah! little wretch,' exclaimed the monster, 'the just and merciful gods have placed thee again in my power! Dost thou remember the day I found thee, and that thou didst cut open my sack? I am much mistaken if thou playest me such a trick this time.' So saying, he pounced on her as an eagle would on a chicken, and, despite the resistance and intreaties of the merchants, carried her off in his arms, running as fast as he could to his great tower. This tower is on a high mountain. The enchanters, who built it, have neglected nothing that could make it beautiful and curious. It has no door; it is entered by the windows, which are placed very high; the walls are of diamonds, which sparkle like the sun, and are impervious to any force. In short, all that art and nature combined could display of splendour, is outshone by what is to be seen there. When the furious giant had secured Constancia, he told her that he would marry her, and render her the happiest creature in the universe; that he would make her mistress of all his treasures; that he would do her the favour to love her, and that he did not doubt but that she would be enchanted at her good fortune in meeting with him. She gave him to understand, by her tears and her lamentations, the excess of her despair; and as in secret I was exerting all my power in her favour, I inspired the giant with a feeling of compassion, which he had never known in his life before; so that in lieu of growing angry, he told the princess he would give her a year, during which time he would use no violence; but that, if at the end of that period she did not consent to his proposal, he would marry her in spite of herself and kill her afterwards, so that she might consider which course would be the best for her to take.

"After this fatal declaration, he shut up with her some of the most beautiful girls in the world, that they might be her companions, and while away the profound sorrow in which she was plunged. He posted giants all round the tower, to prevent any one whatever from approaching it; and in fact, should any one have the temerity to do so, they would speedily meet the reward of their rashness, for the giant sentinels are merciless as they are mighty.

"At length, the poor princess, not seeing the least prospect of relief, and knowing that the year has expired all but one day, has resolved to throw herself from the battlements of the tower into the sea. Such, my lord pigeon, is the state to which she is reduced. The only remedy I can see for this evil is, that you should fly to her, carrying in your beak a little ring I have here. The moment she puts it on her finger, she will become a dove, and you can then fly away together."

The little pigeon was in the greatest hurry to be off: he did not know how to make her understand him; he pulled the ruffles and the flounced apron[1] of the fairy; he then moved to the window, and tapped the panes two or three times with his beak. All this meant, in pigeon tongue, "I beseech thee, madam, to send me instantly with the enchanted ring to comfort our lovely princess!" The fairy understood his language, and, responding to his wishes, "Go! Fly, charming pigeon," said she to him. "Here is the ring, which will be your guide; take great care not to lose it, for you alone can extricate Constancia from the strait she is in."

Prince pigeon, as I have already told you, had not left himself a single feather. He had torn them all out in his extreme despair. The fairy rubbed him all over with a wonderful essence, that clothed him immediately with plumage so beautiful and extraordinary that the doves of Venus were not worthy to be compared to him. He was delighted to see himself in such fine feathers again, and taking wing directly, he reached by break of day the top of the tower, the diamond walls of which glittered so brightly that the sun in his splendour could not outshine them. On the summit of the keep there was an extensive garden, in the midst of which rose an orange-tree laden with flowers and fruit. The rest of the garden was very curious, and prince pigeon would have taken considerable pleasure in its contemplation had not his mind been occupied by more important matters.

He perched on the orange-tree, holding the ring in his claw, and was getting terribly anxious, when the princess entered the garden. She wore a long white robe, her head was covered with a great black veil embroidered with gold. It was drawn close over her face, and trailed on the ground all around her. The enamoured pigeon could not doubt that it was she, had it been possible even for another to possess a form so

[1] Tablier en falbala. The aprons of that day were ornamented with flounces or furbelows (falbalas), with a profusion of which the gowns were also trimmed. Farquhar, in the "Inconstant," makes young Mirabel say whimsically, "I had the oddest dream last night of the Duchess of Burgundy; methought the furbelows of her gown were pinned up so high behind, that I couldn't see her head for her tail."—Act iii. Scene 1.

fine, or an air so majestic. She advanced and seated herself under the orange-tree; and suddenly throwing up her veil, the pigeon was for a few minutes perfectly dazzled with her beauty.

"Sad regrets, melancholy thoughts!" she exclaimed, "ye are now useless. My woeful heart has passed a whole twelvemonth between hope and fear; but the fatal period has arrived. To-day—in a few hours—I must die, or marry the giant. Alas! is it possible that the sovereign fairy and Prince Constancio can have so utterly abandoned me? What have I done to them to deserve it? But to what end are these reflections? Is it not better for me to take at once the great step I have resolved on?" She rose with a determined air, to precipitate herself from the battlements; but as the slightest noise alarmed her, and she heard the young pigeon flutter in the tree, she looked up to ascertain the cause, and the bird at the same moment alighted on her shoulder and dropped the important ring into her bosom. The princess, surprised at the caresses of this beautiful bird and his charming plumage, was equally so at the present he had made her. She examined the ring: she observed upon it some mysterious characters, and was still holding it in her hand when the giant, unobserved by her, entered the garden.

One of the women who waited on her had informed this dreadful lover of the despair of the princess, and that she had resolved to kill herself rather than marry him. When he heard that she had ascended to the top of the tower so early in the morning, he anticipated some fatal catastrophe. His heart, which till then had never been agitated by any but the most barbarous passions, was so enchanted by the beautiful eyes of that amiable maiden that he loved her tenderly. Ye gods! what were her feelings at the sight of him. She dreaded that he would deprive her of the opportunity of destroying herself. The poor pigeon was not a little alarmed at this formidable Colossus. In her confusion the princess slipped the ring on her finger, and, oh, wonderful to relate, she was instantly changed into a dove, and flew off with the faithful pigeon as fast as her wings could carry her.

Never was anybody so astonished as the giant. After staring at his mistress, who in the form of a dove was cleaving the vast expanse of air, he stood for some time perfectly motionless. Then uttered such yells and howls that the very mountains shook with them. They ended only with his life, which he terminated by flinging himself into the sea, wherein it was much fitter he should be drowned than that charming princess. She, in the meanwhile, was flying far away with her guide; but when they had got to a sufficient distance to feel out of danger, they alighted gently in a woodland spot, shaded with many trees, and carpeted with grass and flowers.

Constancia was still ignorant that the pigeon was her lover. He was exceedingly distressed that he could not inform her of the fact by word of mouth, when suddenly he felt an invisible hand loosen his tongue. In great delight at this, he said directly to the princess, "Has not your heart told you, charming dove, that you are with a pigeon who still burns with the flame you kindled?" "My heart sighed for such a happiness,"

replied she, "but dared not flatter itself with the hope of obtaining it. Alas! who could have imagined it! I was on the point of perishing under the blow of my strange destiny. You came to snatch me from the arms of death, or those of a monster which I still more dreaded."

The prince, delighted to hear his dove talk, and to find her still as affectionate as he could desire, said to her everything the most tender and ardent passion could suggest. He related to her all that had happened since the sad moment when they parted, particularly his wonderful meeting with love at the forest, and the fairy in her palace. She was much delighted to hear that her best friend still took an interest in her. "Let us seek her, dear prince," said she to Constancio, "and thank her for all the favours she has shown us. She will restore us to our proper forms, and we will return to your kingdom or to mine."

"If you love me as much as I love you," replied the prince, "I will make a proposal to you in which love alone is concerned; but, charming princess, you will say I am a madman." "Do not struggle to preserve your reputation for sense at the expense of your heart," replied she; "speak boldly, I shall listen to you with pleasure." "I am for retaining our present forms—you as a dove, and I as a pigeon, may still burn with the same flames as Constancia and Constancio. I am convinced that, free from the cares of an empire, having neither council to hold nor war to wage, nor audience to give, exempted from acting everlastingly an important part on the great stage of the world, it will be delightful to live solely for each other in this charming retreat." "Ah!" exclaimed the dove, "how much grandeur and tenderness is there in that idea! Young as I am, alas! I have seen much sorrow! Fortune, jealous of my innocent beauty, has so obstinately persecuted me, that I should be enchanted to renounce all the wealth she could give me for the happiness of living only for you. Yes, my dear prince, I consent. Let us fix on some pleasant place, and pass our best days under this transformation. Let us lead an innocent life without ambition, without a wish, beyond that which virtuous love inspires."

"I will be your guide!" exclaimed love, descending from the summit of Olympus; "so fond a design deserves my protection." "And mine also," said the sovereign fairy, appearing suddenly; "I came to seek you in order to anticipate by some few moments the pleasure of beholding you."

The pigeon and the dove were as much delighted as surprised by this new event. "We place ourselves under your guidance," said Constancia to the fairy. "Do not abandon us," said Constancio to Cupid. "Come then," said the latter, "to Paphos; my mother is still honoured there—and they continue to love the birds that were consecrated to her." "No," said the princess, "we desire not the society of mankind; happy are those who can renounce it! We ask but for a beautiful solitude."

The fairy immediately struck the ground with her wand, and love touched it with a golden arrow. At the same moment they beheld the most exquisite wilderness in nature, richly adorned with groves, flowers, meadows, and fountains. "Live here millions of

years," cried love. "Swear to each other eternal fidelity in presence of this great fairy." "I swear it to my dove," said the pigeon; "I swear it to my pigeon," said the dove. "Your marriage," said the fairy, "could not be blest by a divinity more competent to render you happy. In addition, I promise, that if you should grow weary of this metamorphosis, I will not forsake you; but restore you to your original forms." The pigeon and the dove both thanked the fairy; but assured her they should not invoke her with that object; that they had known too much sorrow as human beings; they only requested her to send to them Ruson, if he were still alive. "He has changed his condition," said love; "it was I who had condemned him to take the form of a ram; I have had compassion on him, and replaced him on the throne I tore him from." Constancia no longer wondered that she had seen Ruson display so much grace and intelligence. She intreated love to relate to her the adventures of an animal that had been so dear to her. "I will tell you some day," said Cupid kindly; "but at this moment I am wanted and wished for in so many places, that I hardly know where to fly first. Farewell!" he continued, "fond and happy pair; you may boast of being the wisest couple in my empire."

The sovereign fairy remained some time with the newly-married birds. She could not sufficiently applaud the contempt they had shown for worldly grandeur. It cannot be doubted that they took the surest means to enjoy a peaceful existence. At length she took her leave of them, and it is well known from her account, and from Cupid's, that prince pigeon and princess dove loved each other faithfully for ever.

"Of faithful love behold the destiny,
Cares still tormenting—Hopes but born to die;
Stern trials, sad reverses—'Neath the sun
The course of true love never smooth did run.[1]
Cupid, who links us by such charming ties,
Can lead to happiness in various wise;
The god by troubles oft insures our bliss.
Young hearts, who sigh o'er such a tale as this,
Know that when love is pure, suspense and pain
Are but the heralds of his happy reign."

[1] The Countess does not actually paraphrase Shakespeare, but the sense of the passage is so similar that, as in a former instance, p. 83, I felt I could not render the original more faithfully than by availing myself of a popular quotation.

# PRINCESS BELLE-ETOILE AND PRINCE CHERI

ONCE upon a time there was a princess, of whose past grandeur nothing remained but her canopy and her cadenas.[1] The one was of velvet, embroidered with pearls, the other of gold, enriched with diamonds. She kept them as long as she could; but the extreme necessity to which she found herself reduced obliged her, every now and then, to take off a pearl, a diamond, or an emerald, and sell it privately for the support of her attendants. She was a widow, left with three daughters, very young, and very amiable. She considered, that if she brought them up with the grandeur and magnificence befitting their birth, they would feel the inevitable alteration in their circumstances more keenly; she therefore took the resolution to sell what little property she had left, and to go and settle with her three daughters in some country house a long way off, where they might manage to live within their slender income. In passing through a forest infested with thieves, she was robbed, and left all but destitute. The poor princess, more afflicted by this last misfortune than by all that she had before experienced, saw plainly that she must either work for her bread, or perish with hunger. She had formerly taken pleasure in keeping a good table, and knew how to make excellent sauces. She never went anywhere without her little golden spice-box,[2] which people came to see from a great distance. That which used to be her amusement now furnished her with the means of subsistence. She settled herself in a very pretty house near a large city, and made wonderful ragouts. The people in those parts were fond of good living, so everybody flocked to her establishment. Nothing was talked of but the excellent cook: they scarcely allowed her time to breathe. In the meanwhile her three daughters grew up, and their beauty would have been no less talked of than the princess's sauces, if she had not kept them in their chamber, out of which they were rarely allowed to go.

On one of the finest days in the year, there came in a little old woman, who seemed very weary. She leaned upon her stick, her body was almost bent double, and her face full of wrinkles. "I come," said she, "to eat one of your good dinners, for I wish, before I go to another world, to be able to boast of something I have enjoyed in this."

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[1] A case for knife, fork, spoon, &c.: see note, page 340.

[2] "Petite cuisine d'or." Cuisine in this sense signifies "a long box with several compartments, which contain everything requisite for making ragouts, and which can be carried about when travelling. —Landais. It has been previously translated, "A small kitchen, furnished with golden plate."

She took a straw chair, seated herself near the fire, and told the princess to make haste. As she could not do everything herself, she called her three daughters; the first was named Roussette, the second, Brunette, and the third, Blondiue. She had named each after the colour of her hair. They were dressed like country girls, in bodices and petticoats of different colours. The youngest was the handsomest, and the most gentle. Their mother ordered one to fetch some young pigeons out of the dove-cote, another to kill some chickens, and the third to make the pastry. In short, they quickly set before the old woman a nice clean tablecloth, a very white napkin, highly polished earthenware, and a good dinner of several courses. The wine was good, there was no lack of ice, the glasses were rinsed every moment by the fairest hands in the world; all this whetted the appetite of the good little old woman. She got a little merry, and said a thousand things, in which the princess, who appeared to be taking no notice, discovered considerable wit.

The meal, being finished as gaily as it began, the old woman arose, and said to the princess, "My very good friend, if I had money I would pay you: but I have been long a beggar. I could have found no such good cheer elsewhere, and all I can promise you is, that I will send you better customers than myself." The princess smiled, and said to her kindly, "Go, my good mother, do not trouble yourself, I am always paid when I have gratified any one." "We are delighted to have waited on you," said Blondine; "and if you will stay supper, we shall be still more so." "How happy are they," said the old woman, "who are born with such benevolent hearts! But do you imagine you will not be rewarded? Be assured," continued she, "that the first wish you make without thinking of me, will be fulfilled." At the same moment she disappeared, and they had not the least doubt of her being a fairy.

They were astonished at this adventure. They had never seen a fairy before. They were frightened, and talked of her constantly for five or six months, so that, whenever they wished for anything she came immediately into their minds. Nothing, therefore, came to pass, which greatly incensed them against the fairy. But one day, that the king was going out hunting, he called in passing at the celebrated cook's, to ascertain if she were really as clever as report asserted, and as he approached the garden, in which the three sisters were gathering strawberries, they heard the noise, and Roussette exclaimed, "Ah! if I were fortunate enough to marry my lord admiral, I venture to say, that, with my spindle and distaff, I would spin so much thread, and with that thread make so much cloth, that he would never want to purchase any more for the sails of his vessels." "And I," said Brunette, "if fortune were sufficiently favourable to me to make me the wife of the king's brother; I venture to say, that, with my needle, I would make him so much lace that his palace would be filled with it." "And I," said Blondine, "I venture to say, that if the king married me, I would bring him two handsome boys, and a beautiful girl, whose hair should fall in ringlets, out of which should come fine jewels, and each should have a brilliant star on the forehead, and a rich chain of gold around the neck."

One of the king's favourites who had preceded him to inform the mistress of the house of his majesty's approach, having heard voices in the garden, stopped and listened quietly, and was greatly surprised at the conversation of these three handsome girls. He went in all haste to amuse the king by its repetition. The king laughed at it, and ordered the girls to be brought before him.

They quickly presented themselves with wonderful grace and good manners. They saluted the king with much respect and modesty, and when he inquired if it were true that they had been holding such a conversation respecting the husbands they desired, they blushed and cast down their eyes. He pressed them still further to acknowledge it. They did so, and he immediately exclaimed, "I certainly do not know what power is influencing me, but I will not leave this house until I have married the beautiful Blondine." "Sire," said the king's brother, "I crave your permission to marry this lovely Brunette." "Grant me a similar favour, sire," said the admiral, "for this golden-haired girl pleases me greatly."

The king, much gratified at being thus imitated by the chief persons in his dominions, told them he approved of their choice, and asked the mother of the young women if she consented. She replied that it gave her the greatest joy she could ever hope to experience. The king embraced her, and the prince and the admiral followed his example.

When the king was ready for dinner, there came down the chimney a table laid for seven with gold plate and everything that could be imagined most delicate to provoke the appetite. The king, however, hesitated to taste anything; he feared the witches had cooked the viands at one of their festivals, and this mode of serving it by the chimney appeared to him rather suspicious. The buffet was also set out. Nothing was to be seen but basins and vases of gold, the workmanship of which surpassed the material. At the same time a swarm of bees appeared in crystal hives, and commenced the most charming music that can possibly be imagined. The whole dining-room was filled with hornets, bees, wasps, gnats, and other insects of that description, which waited on the king with supernatural ability. Three or four thousand flies helped him to wine, without one of them daring to drown itself in it, which evinced a moderation and a discipline perfectly astonishing. The princess and her daughters saw clearly enough that all this could only be attributed to the little old woman, and they blessed the hour they had known her.

After the banquet, which lasted so long that night surprised the company at table (of which his majesty was rather ashamed, for it appeared as if Bacchus had taken the place of Cupid at this marriage), the king rose and said, "Let us finish this ceremony as we ought to have begun it." He drew his ring from his finger, and placed it on that of Blondine: the prince and the admiral imitated their sovereign. The bees sang with redoubled vigour as the company danced, and made very merry, and all those who came in the king's train advanced, and saluted the queen and the princess her sister. As to the wife of the admiral they treated her with less ceremony, which annoyed her

excessively, for she was the elder sister of Brunette and Blondine, and had made the least brilliant match of the three.

The king sent his grand equerry to inform the queen, his mother, of what had taken place, and to order out his most magnificent coaches to fetch Blondine and her two sisters. The queen-mother was the most cruel and passionate woman in the world. When she heard that her son had married without consulting her, and moreover a girl of obscure birth, and that the prince, his brother, had done the same thing, she flew into such a rage that she frightened the whole court. She asked the grand equerry what motive could possibly have induced the king to make so degrading a match. He answered, the hope of becoming the father of two boys and a girl who should be born with long curly hair, stars on their foreheads, and gold chains round their necks, and that the idea of such wonderful things had enchanted him. The queen-mother smiled contemptuously at the credulity of her son, and made several offensive observations upon it, which sufficiently evinced the fury she was in.

The coaches had already arrived at the little country house. The king invited his mother-in-law to follow him, and promised that she should be treated with the greatest distinction; but she reflected that the court was like a sea in constant motion, and said, "Sire, I have had too much experience of the world to quit the quiet retreat it has cost me such trouble to obtain." "What!" said the king, "will you continue to keep an eating-house?" "No," she replied; "you will allow me something to live on." "At least permit me," added the king, "to give you an establishment and officers to attend on you." "I thank you, sire," said the princess: "while I live by myself I shall have no enemies to trouble me; but if I had a train of domestics I fear I might find some amongst them." The king admired the sense and discretion of a woman who thought and spoke like a philosopher.

While he was pressing his mother-in-law to accompany him, Roussette, the admiral's lady, contrived to hide in the bottom of her coach all the fine basins and gold vases from the buffet, determined not to lose one of them; but the fairy, who saw everything though nobody saw her, changed them into earthenware. When Roussette arrived at court, and would have carried them into her cabinet, she found nothing that was worth the trouble. The king and queen tenderly embraced the prudent princess, and assured her that she might command whatever lay in their power. They quitted the rural abode, and repaired to the city, preceded by trumpets, hautboys, kettle- and other drums, which made noise enough to be heard a long way off. The confidantes of the queen-mother had advised her to conceal her displeasure, as it would offend the king, and the consequences might be disagreeable. She constrained herself, therefore, and received her two daughters-in-law with apparent kindness, making them presents of jewels, and praising whatever they did, whether it was good or bad.

The fair queen and Princess Brunette were united by a strict friendship; but Roussette hated them both mortally. "Only see," said she, "the good luck of my two sisters; one is a queen, the other wife of a prince of the blood-royal. Their husbands adore them;

and I, who am the eldest, and who consider myself a hundred times handsomer than either of them, I have only married an admiral, who doesn't care for me half as much as he ought." The jealousy she entertained of her sisters soon made her one of the party of the queen-mother, for it was well known that the affection she displayed for her daughters-in-law was but feigned, and that nothing would give her more pleasure than an opportunity to do them some mischief. The queen and the princess were both approaching the period for their confinement, when unfortunately a serious war broke out, and the king was compelled to depart to place himself at the head of his army. The young queen and the princess being obliged to remain behind in the power of the queen-mother, besought the king to permit them to return to their own mother, and seek consolation with her during the cruel absence of their husbands. The king could not consent to this; he conjured his wife to remain in the palace; he assured her that his mother would use her well, and indeed he implored her most earnestly to love and cherish her daughter-in-law, adding that she could not oblige him more than by so doing; that he anticipated being the father of beautiful children, and that he should look with the greatest anxiety for the news of their birth. The wicked old queen, enchanted that her son confided his wife to her care, promised him she would think of nothing but Blondine's safety, and assured him he might make himself perfectly easy on that score. He therefore took his departure, but with so much desire to return quickly, that he risked his troops in every encounter, and fortune continually favoured his rashness, and crowned all his plans with success. The queen was confined, however, before the campaign was ended, and the princess, her sister, gave birth the same day to a beautiful boy but died almost immediately after.

Roussette, the admiral's wife, was very busy in forming plans to injure the young queen. When she saw her the mother of such lovely children, and had none herself, her rage increased. She determined to speak at once to the queen-mother, for there was no time to lose. "Madam," said she to her, "I am so deeply sensible of the honour your majesty has done me in looking on me with some little favour, that I would willingly sacrifice my interests to further yours. I can comprehend all the vexation that you must have endured since the king and the prince formed such degrading alliances. Here are now four children born to perpetuate the errors of their fathers. Our mother is a poor villager, who was in want of bread, when it occurred to her to turn cook and make fricassees. Take my advice, madam, let us make a fricassee of these little brats, and send them out of the world before they cause you to blush at them." "Ah, my dear lady admiral," cried the queen, embracing her; "how I love thee for thy sense of justice, and for sharing as thou dost in my well-founded indignation! I had already resolved to do what thou hast suggested. I am only perplexed as to the mode of operation." "Give yourself no trouble about it, madam," replied Roussette; "my lap-dog has just had three puppies, two male and one female; they have each a star on their forehead, and a mark round their necks, which has the effect of a chain. We must make the queen believe that she has been brought to bed of these little brutes, and take the two boys,

the girl, and the son of the princess, and have them made away with." "Thy project pleases me vastly," exclaimed the queen-mother. "I have already given some orders to Feintise, the queen's lady-in-waiting, on the subject, so that we have only to send for the little dogs." "Here they are," said the admiral's wife, "I brought them with me;" so saying she opened a large purse which she always carried at her side, and pulled out of it three blind puppies, which the queen-mother and she swaddled in fine linen, embroidered with gold, and ornamented with lace, as the royal children should have been. They placed them in a covered basket, and then the wicked old queen, followed by Roussette, proceeded to the young queen's apartment. "I come to thank you," said the queen-mother, "for the beautiful heirs you have presented to my son. Here are heads well formed to wear a crown. I am not surprised that you promised your husband two sons and a daughter, with stars on their foreheads, flowing locks and chains of gold round their necks. Take them and nurse them yourself, for you will find no woman who will suckle puppies."

The poor queen, who was well-nigh exhausted with the sufferings she had undergone, was ready to die with grief when she saw the three little beasts of dogs, and the sort of kennel they made of her bed, in which they lay yelping desperately. She began to weep bitterly, then clasping her hands, she said, "Alas! madam, add not to my affliction by your reproaches; I could scarcely have had a greater one befall me. I should have thought myself too happy if the gods had permitted me to die before I had known the disgrace of being mother to these little monsters. The king will hate me as much as he loved me." Her voice was stifled with sighs and sobs. She had not strength to say more, and the queen-mother, continuing to load her with abuses, had the pleasure of passing three hours at the head of her bed as she lay in that wretched condition. At last she left her, and the queen's sister, who pretended to sympathise with her sorrow, told her that she was not the first who had met with such a misfortune; that it was clearly a trick of the old fairy who had promised to work such wonders for them; but that as it might be dangerous for her to see the king, she advised her to go to her poor mother with her three little brats of puppies. The queen answered only with tears. The heart must have been hard indeed that was not moved by the state she was reduced to, suckling those filthy whelps under the impression that she was their mother.

The old queen ordered Feintise to strangle the queen's three children and the son of the princess, and bury them so secretly that no one should ever be the wiser. As she was about to execute this order, and held already in her hand the fatal cord, she cast her eyes on the poor infants, and was so struck by their beauty and the extraordinary appearance of the stars that sparkled on their foreheads, that she shrank from dipping her hands in such illustrious blood.

She had a boat brought round to the sea-beach. Then put the four babes into the same cradle with some strings of jewels, so that if fortune should cast them into the hands of some one charitable enough to bring them up they would be rewarded for their trouble.

The boat driving before a stiff breeze was soon so far out at sea that Feintise could no longer distinguish it. At the same time the waves began to rise, the sun was shrouded, the clouds broke into torrents of rain, and a thousand claps of thunder woke the echoes all around. She could not doubt that the boat would be swamped, and she felt relieved by the thought that the poor little innocents would perish, for she would otherwise be always haunted by the fear that some extraordinary event would occur in their favour, and betray the share she had had in their preservation.

The king, incessantly occupied with the thoughts of his dear wife, and of the state in which he had left her, having agreed to a short truce, came back post haste to the city. He reached the palace twelve hours after the queen's confinement. When the queen-mother heard of his arrival, she went to meet him with a well put on air of grief. She held him for a long time clasped to her bosom, bathing his face with her tears. It appeared as if her sorrow had deprived her of words. The king, trembling from head to foot, dreaded to ask what had happened, for he could not doubt that some great disaster had befallen him. At length she made a great effort, and told him that his wife had given birth to three puppies. They were immediately produced by Feintise; and the admiral's wife, all in tears, flinging herself at the king's feet, implored him not to put the queen to death, but to content himself with sending her back to her mother; that she was already resigned to such a fate, and that she would consider that sentence a great mercy.

The king was so thunderstruck he could scarcely breathe. He gazed on the puppies, and observed with astonishment the star which each had in the middle of its forehead, and the different colour of the hair which formed a ring round each of their necks. He sank into a chair, revolving a thousand fancies in his mind, and unable to come to any resolution; but the queen-mother pressed him so strongly that at length he pronounced the sentence of banishment upon the innocent queen. She was immediately placed in a litter with her three dogs, and carried without the least mark of respect to her mother's house, where she arrived all but dead.

The gods had looked with compassion on the barque in which the three princes and the princess had been sent to sea. The fairy who protected them caused milk instead of rain to fall into their little mouths. They suffered nothing from the terrible storm which had risen so suddenly, for seven days and seven nights they had floated on a sea as smooth as a canal, when they were met by a corsair. The captain having been struck, although at a great distance, by the brilliancy of the stars upon their foreheads, boarded the boat, believing it to be full of jewels. He found some, sure enough; but what moved him still more was the beauty of these four wonderful children. The desire to preserve them induced him to alter his course, and make all sail home in order to give them to his wife who had no children, and had long wished for some.

His speedy return alarmed her, for he had sailed on a very long voyage; but she was transported with joy when he placed in her hands so great a treasure. They admired together the wonderful stars, the chains of gold that could not be taken off their necks, and their long ringlets. Much greater was the woman's astonishment when she combed them, for at every instant there rolled out pearls, rubies, diamonds, and emeralds of various sizes and exceedingly fine. She told her husband of it, who was not less surprised than herself.

"I am very tired," said he, "of a corsair's life, and if the locks of those little children continue to supply us with such treasures, I will give up roaming the seas, for my wealth will be as great as that of our most celebrated captains. The corsair's wife, whose name was Corsine, was enchanted at the resolution her husband had come to, and loved the four infants so much the more for it. She named the princess Belle-Etoile, her eldest brother Petit-Soleil, the second Heureux, and the son of the princess, Cheri. The latter was much handsomer than either of the other two boys, so that, although he had neither star nor chain, Corsine loved him more than she did his cousins.

As she could not bring them all up without the aid of a nurse, she requested her husband, who was exceedingly fond of hunting, to catch her some very young fawns. This he soon found means of doing, as the forest in which they lived was extensive and well stocked with deer. Corsine, having acquired the fawns, tied them up to windward, and the hinds smelling them, came to suckle them. Corsine then hid the fawns and put the infants in their place, who thrived admirably on the milk of the hinds. Four of them came twice a day to Corsine's dwelling, in search of the princes and princess, whom they took for fawns.

Thus passed the early infancy of these royal children. The corsair and his wife were so passionately fond of them that they lavished upon them every attention. The man had been well educated. It was less from inclination than the caprice of fortune that he had become a corsair. He had married Corsine when she was in the service of a princess, in whose court she had happily cultivated her natural talents. She had excellent manners, and though she resided in a sort of wilderness, where she and her husband subsisted only on the plunder he brought home from his cruises, she had not forgotten the usages of polite society. They were highly delighted at being no longer obliged to

expose themselves to the peril attending the trade of a corsair. They had become sufficiently rich to discontinue it, for every three days there dropped, as I have already said, from the beautiful hair of the princess and her brothers, jewels of great value, which Corsine disposed of in the nearest town, and always brought back from it a thousand pretty things for her four babies.

As they grew older, the corsair applied himself seriously to the cultivation of the fine natural abilities with which heaven had endowed them, and as he felt convinced there were some great mysteries attached to their birth, and the accident by which he had met with them, he desired, by his care of their education, to prove his gratitude to the gods for the present they had made him. So having rendered his dwelling more habitable, he attracted to it persons of talent, who taught the children various sciences, which they acquired with a facility surprising to all their great masters.

The corsair and his wife had never told the story of the four children. They passed for their own, although they gave evidence by all their actions that they came of more illustrious blood. They were exceedingly united, unaffected, and courteous; but Prince Cheri entertained for Princess Belle-Etoile a more ardent and devoted affection than the other two. The moment she expressed a wish for anything, he would attempt even impossibilities to gratify her; he scarcely ever quitted her side. When she went hunting, he accompanied her: when she stayed at home he always found some excuse for not going out himself. Petit-Soleil and Heureux, who were her brothers, addressed her with less tenderness and less respect. She remarked the difference, and doing justice to Cheri, she loved him better than she did the others. As they grew up, their mutual affection increased with their age. At first it was productive of unalloyed pleasure. "My gentle brother," said Belle-Etoile to him, "if my wishes could render you happy, you should be one of the greatest kings on earth." "Alas, sister!" replied he, "do not begrudge me the happiness I enjoy in your society. I prefer passing one hour where you are to all the grandeur you desire for me." When she made a similar speech to her brothers, they answered frankly that they should be delighted, and when to prove them she added, "Yes, I would that ye sat on the highest thrones in the world, though I should never see ye more," they immediately answered, "You are right, sister, it would be well worth the sacrifice." "You would consent then, in that case," said she, "not to see me again?" "Certainly," they replied, "we should be satisfied with occasionally hearing of you."

When she was alone she reflected on these various modes of loving, and she found her own feelings corresponded exactly to theirs, for though Petit-Soleil and Heureux were dear to her, she had no desire to pass her life continually with them, while with regard to Cheri, she burst into tears whenever she contemplated the probability that their father might send him to sea or carry him to the wars. It was then that love, disguised under the specious form of natural affection, established itself in these young hearts. At fourteen, Belle-Etoile began to reproach herself with the injustice she felt she was doing her brothers by not loving them all equally well. She imagined that the attentions and

caresses of Cheri were the cause of it. She forbade him to seek more opportunities of pleasing her. "You have already found but too many," said she to him graciously; "and you have succeeded in causing me to make a great difference between our brothers and yourself." What joy did he not feel at hearing her speak thus? Far from relaxing in his assiduities, he redoubled them, and every day paid her some new and gallant attention.

They were as yet ignorant both of the extent and of the nature of their affection, when one day some new books were brought to Belle-Etoile. She took up the first that came to hand. It was the history of two young lovers, whose passion had commenced whilst they considered themselves brother and sister. They had afterwards been discovered by their families, and eventually, after passing through infinite troubles, espoused each other.[1] As Cheri read remarkably well, and not only understood what he read, but had the faculty of conveying the full sense of it to others, the princess requested him to read to her, while she finished some work in floss-silk which she was anxious to complete. He read, therefore, the above story, and it was not without much emotion that he discovered in it a perfect description of all his feelings. Belle-Etoile was not less surprised. It seemed as though the author had read all that was passing in her soul. The more Cheri read the more he was agitated. The more the princess listened, the more she was affected. Despite all her efforts her eyes filled with tears, and they ran down her cheeks. Cheri, also, struggled in vain against his feelings. He turned pale, his voice faltered. Each of them suffered all that can be imagined under such circumstances. "Ah, sister," he exclaimed, gazing on her sadly and dropping the book, "how happy was Hippolyte in not being the brother of Julie!" "We are not so fortunate," replied she; "alas, do we less deserve to be so?" As she uttered these words, she felt she had said too much. She stopped in great confusion, and if anything could have crushed the prince, it was the state in which he saw her.

From that moment they both fell into a profound melancholy, without further explanation. They partly perceived what was passing in their souls, and studied to conceal from every one the secret which they would willingly have been ignorant of themselves, and which they never spoke of to each other. Still it is so natural to flatter one's self, that the princess built much upon the fact that Cheri alone had neither a star on his forehead nor a chain round his neck, although he had long ringlets, out of which jewels fell when they were combed, the same as his cousins.

The three princes having one day gone out hunting together, Belle-Etoile shut herself up in a small cabinet which she was partial to because it was gloomy, and she could muse in it at more liberty than elsewhere. She sate there perfectly still and silent. This cabinet was divided from Corsine's chamber only by the wainscot, and she imagined that the princess was out walking. The latter, therefore, heard her say to the corsair, "Belle-Etoile is now of an age to be married. If we knew who she was we

[1] The names of Hippolyte and Julie which follow, show that Madame d'Aulnoy here alludes to her own novel, "Histoire d'Hippolyte, Comte de Duglas."

would endeavour to provide a suitable match for her; or if we could ascertain that those who pass for her brothers were not so, we would give her to one of them, for where could she ever find any so perfectly handsome?"

"When I fell in with them," said the corsair, "I saw nothing that could give me any idea of their birth. The jewels that were tied to their cradle showed that they belonged to wealthy people. What was most singular, they appeared from their ages to have been all born at the same time, and four at a birth is by no means a common occurrence." "I suspect also," said Corsine, "that Cheri is not their brother, he has neither star nor neck-chain." "That's true," replied her husband; "but diamonds fall from his hair as they do from that of the others. After all the wealth we have amassed through the means of these dear children, the only wish I have left is to discover their origin." "We must leave it to the gods," said Corsine; "they gave them to us, and in their own good time they will no doubt develop the mystery."

Belle-Etoile listened attentively to this conversation. It is impossible to describe her delight at the hope she was thereby led to entertain that she was of some illustrious race; for, though she had always respected those whom she had considered her parents, she could not help feeling some pain at being the daughter of a corsair; but what still more enchanted her was, the thought that Cheri might not be her brother. She was all impatience to talk to him about it, and to relate to the whole party the extraordinary adventure she had become acquainted with.

She mounted an Isabella-coloured horse;[1] the black mane of which was dressed with rows of diamonds; for she had only to pass a comb once through her hair, to obtain jewels enough to decorate an entire hunting equipage. The green velvet housings of her steed were covered with diamonds and embroidered with rubies. She was quickly in the saddle, and away to the forest in search of her brothers. The sound of horns and hounds sufficiently indicated their whereabouts, and she joined them in a few minutes. At the first sight of her Cheri left the chase, and advanced to meet her much quicker than the others. "What an agreeable surprise, Belle-Etoile!" he cried; "you at length out hunting; who could not be diverted for an instant from the pleasure you derive from music and the sciences, which you make your study."

"I have so much to tell you," replied she, "that wishing to see you alone, I came to seek you." "Alas, sister!" said he sighing, "what would you with me to-day? It appears to me you long ago determined not to require anything at my hands." She blushed, and casting down her eyes, sat upon her horse, sad and thoughtful, without replying to him. At length her two brothers came up, she roused herself at sight of them, as though she had been in a deep sleep, and jumped to the ground, leading the way; they all followed her, and when she reached the middle of a little piece of mossy ground, shaded by trees, "Sit down here," said she, "and learn what I have just heard." She related to them exactly the conversation the corsair had with his wife, and

[1] Dun-coloured, see note, page 174.

how it appeared that they were not their children. Nothing could exceed the surprise of the three princes; they consulted among themselves what they ought to do. One was for setting off without saying anything; the other was for remaining; and the third wished to depart, and to say so. The first maintained that his was the surest way, because the money the corsair and his wife made by combing them would induce them to retain them. The other replied it would be well to quit them if they knew what place to fix upon to go to, and what would be their condition; but to be called vagrants in the world was not an agreeable thing: the last added that it would be very ungrateful to abandon their preservers without their consent; but that it would be equally stupid to wish to remain longer with them in the middle of a forest, where they could not learn who they were; and that, therefore, the best thing would be to speak to them, and make them consent to their departure. They all approved of this advice, and immediately mounted their horses to seek the corsair and Corsine.

Cheri's heart was flattered by all that hope could suggest most agreeable to console an afflicted lover; his love enabled him to divine some portion of the future; he did not believe he was Belle-Etoile's brother: his long-constrained passion finding some little vent inspired him with a thousand tender thoughts which charmed him. They accosted the corsair and Corsine with looks of mingled joy and anxiety. "We do not come," said Petit-Soleil (for he was spokesman), "to deny the affection, and gratitude, and the respect we owe you: although we are informed of the way in which you found us at sea, and that you are neither our father nor mother, your compassion in saving us, the excellent education you have given us, the care and kindness you have manifested, are such indisputable obligations, that nothing in the world can free us from our duty to you. We come, then, to repeat to you our sincere thanks, to intreat you to relate to us the particulars of so extraordinary an incident, and to counsel us, so that, acting upon your sage advice, we should have nothing wherewith to reproach ourselves."

The corsair and Corsine were much surprised at the discovery of what they had so carefully concealed. "You have been informed too truly," said the corsair, "and we cannot hide from you that you are indeed not our children, and that fortune alone threw you into our hand. We have no insight as to your birth, but the jewels which were in your cradle indicated that your parents were either great lords, or very rich people—as to the rest—what advice can we give you? If you consult our affection for you, certainly you would remain with us, and console our old age by your charming company. If the mansion we have built here does not please you, or that living in this retirement distresses you, we will go wherever you wish, provided it is not to court; long experience has given us a distaste for it; and you would be disgusted also, perhaps, if you were made acquainted with the continual troubles, dissimulations, jealousies, caprices, real evils, and imaginary benefits that are to be met with there: we could tell you still more about it, but you would think that our counsels were interested. Indeed, they are so, my children, for we would wish you to remain in this peaceful retreat, although you are your own masters to leave it whenever you like. At the same time remember you are

at present in port, and you would venture on a tempestuous ocean; that the troubles of it nearly always surpass the pleasures; that life is short, that it is often quitted in the midst of our career, that the grandeurs of the world are as false brilliants, which by a strange fatality we permit to dazzle us, and that the most sterling happiness is to know how to limit our desires, to love peace, and to seek wisdom."

The corsair would not have ended his remonstrances so soon had he not been interrupted by Prince Heureux. "My dear father," said he, "we are too anxious to discover something of our birth, to bury ourselves in the depths of a desert. The moral you teach is excellent, and I wish we were able to profit by it, but some strange fatality calls us elsewhere: allow us to fulfil the course of our destiny—we will come again to see you, and give you an account of our adventures."

At these words the corsair and his wife shed tears. The princes were very much affected, and Belle-Etoile particularly so, who was of an admirable disposition, and who would never have thought of quitting the desert if she had been sure that Cheri would have always remained with her.

This resolution having been taken, they thought of nothing else, but preparing for their embarkation; for having been found upon the sea, they had some hope it would enlighten them on the matter they were so anxious about. They had a horse for each of them put on board their little vessel, and after combing their heads till they were sore in order to leave as many jewels as they could to Corsine, they begged her to give them in return the strings of diamonds that were in their cradle. She went to fetch them from her cabinet, where she had kept them very carefully, and she fastened them all upon Belle-Etoile's dress, whom she embraced incessantly, bathing her face with her tears.

Never was there so sad a separation; the corsair and his wife thought it would kill them. Their grief did not arise from interested motives, for they had amassed so much treasure, that they did not wish for any more. Petit-Soleil, Heureux, Cheri, and Belle-Etoile, went on board the vessel. The corsair had had one built for the voyage, and fitted up very magnificently; the mast was of ebony and cedar-wood, the ropes were of green silk mixed with gold, the sails of gold and green cloth, and the paintings were beautiful. As it sailed out of port, Cleopatra, with her Antony, and even the whole of Venus's galley, would have lowered their flag to it. The princess was seated under a rich canopy near the poop; her two brothers and her cousin stood close by her, looking more brilliant than the planets, and their stars threw out long dazzling rays of light. They determined to sail to the very spot where the corsair had found them, and accordingly they did so. They made preparations for a grand sacrifice there to the gods and to the fairies, to obtain their protection and guidance to their birthplace. They were about to immolate a turtle-dove, but the compassionate princess thought it so beautiful that she saved its life, and to preserve it from such a fate in future she let it fly:—"Depart," said she, "little bird of Venus; and if, some day, I should have need of thee, forget not the kindness I have shown thee." The turtle-dove flew away.

The sacrifice ended, they commenced so charming a concert, that it seemed as though all nature kept profound silence to listen to them: the waves were still; there was not a breath of wind; Zephyr alone dallied with the princess's hair, and disarranged her veil slightly. At this moment a siren issued from the water, who sang so well, that the princess and her brothers were charmed with her. After singing several airs, she turned towards them, and said, "Cease your anxiety, let your vessel go where it will; land where it stops, and let all those who are in love continue to love each other."

Belle-Etoile and Cheri felt an extraordinary delight at what the siren had just told them. They were convinced it was intended for them, and, exchanging signs of intelligence, their hearts conversed in silence, without Petit-Soleil and Heureux perceiving it. The vessel sailed at the pleasure of the wind and the tide; nothing very extraordinary occurred in their navigation, save that the weather was always beautiful, and the sea always calm. They were three whole months on their voyage, during which time the enamoured Prince Cheri and the princess often conversed together. "What flattering hopes I feel," said he, one day, "charming Etoile! I am not your brother; this heart which knows your power, and will never acknowledge another, is not born for crimes: and it would be one to love you as I do, if you were my sister, but the charitable siren, who came to counsel us, confirmed me in my opinion upon that subject." "Ah, brother!" replied she, "do not rely on indications which are still too obscure for our comprehension. What would be our fate if we irritated the gods by encouraging feelings which were displeasing to them? The siren spoke so vaguely, that one must have a great fancy for guessing, to apply what she said to ourselves." "You refuse to do so, cruel one," said the afflicted prince, "much less from the respect you owe the gods, than from your aversion to me!" Belle-Etoile did not answer him, and raising her eyes to heaven, heaved a deep sigh, which he could not help interpreting favourably.

It was at the time of year when the days were long and sultry: towards the evening the princess and her brothers went upon deck to see the sun set in the bosom of the waters—she sat down; the princes placed themselves near her, they took their instruments, and commenced their charming concert. In the meantime, the vessel driving before a fresh gale, sailed more quickly, and shortly rounded a small promontory, which concealed a portion of the most beautiful city in the world. Suddenly it came in sight, and its appearance astonished our charming young travellers. All the palaces were of marble, with gilded roofs; and the rest of the houses were of very fine porcelain, several evergreen trees mingled the enamel of their leaves with the various colours of the marble, the gold and the porcelain, so that they were anxious their vessel should enter the port—but they doubted whether they should be able to find room; there were so many others, that the masts seemed like a floating forest.

Their wishes were accomplished, they landed, and the shore in a moment was crowded with people, who had observed the magnificence of the ship. That which the Argonauts constructed for the capture of the golden fleece, was not more brilliant—the

stars, and the beauty of these wonderful children enchanted all who beheld them; they ran and told the king the news; as he could not believe it, and as the grand terrace of the palace looked out upon the sea-shore, he speedily repaired thither. He saw the princes, Petit Soleil and Cheri, take the princess in their arms and carry her ashore—then get their horses out, their rich harness corresponding perfectly with everything else about the vessel. Petit-Soleil mounted one that was blacker than jet. That which Heureux rode was grey, Cheri's was as white as snow, and the princess was on her Isabella barb.[1] The king admired them all four seated upon their horses, which curveted so proudly, that they kept at a distance all who would have pressed too near them. The princes hearing the people say, "There is the king," looked up, and, struck by his majestic appearance, made a profound obeisance, and passed slowly, fixing their eyes upon him. He also looked earnestly at them, and was as much charmed by the princess's beauty, as by the handsome mien of the young princes. He ordered his equerry to offer them his protection, and everything that they might require in a country where they were evidently strangers. They received the honour the king conferred on them with much respect and gratitude, and said they only required a house, where they could be alone, and that they should be glad, if it were one or two leagues from the city, as they were very fond of walking. The principal equerry immediately gave them one of the most magnificent, wherein they and all their train were commodiously lodged.

The king was so interested about these four children that he had just seen, that he immediately went into the chamber of the queen, his mother, to tell her of the wonderful stars which shone upon their foreheads, and everything that he admired in them. She was thunderstruck at it. She asked him directly, how old they might be—he replied fifteen or sixteen; she showed no signs of uneasiness, but she was terribly afraid that Feintise had betrayed her. In the meantime, the king kept walking to and fro, and said, "How happy a father must be to possess such handsome sons, and such a beautiful daughter! Unfortunate sovereign that I am, for I am the father of three dogs. There are illustrious heirs! The succession to my crown is certainly well secured."

The queen-mother listened to these words with dreadful uneasiness. The brilliant stars and the age of these strangers, agreed so well with the peculiarities and date of birth of the princes and their sister, that she strongly suspected she had been deceived by Feintise, and that instead of killing the king's children she had saved them. As she had great self-possession, she gave no sign of what was passing in her mind; she would not even send that day to inquire about several things she was anxious to ascertain; but the next morning she desired her secretary to go to the strangers, and under the pretext of giving orders in the house for their accommodation, examine everything, and observe whether they really had stars upon their foreheads.

The secretary departed early in the morning; he arrived as the princess was at her

[1] See note, page 174.

toilet: in those days they did not purchase their complexions at shops—those who were fair, remained fair, those who were black did not become white, so that he saw her having her hair dressed. They were combing it; her fair tresses, finer than gold thread, fell in ringlets to the ground. There were several baskets round her, to prevent the jewels, which fell from her hair, being lost: the star upon her forehead threw out so much brilliancy they could scarcely bear it, and the gold chain round her neck was as wonderful as the precious diamonds which rolled from the crown of her head. The secretary, with difficulty, believed his eyes; but the princess, selecting the largest pearl, begged him to accept it in remembrance of her; it was the one that the kings of Spain esteem so much, and is called peregrina,[1] that is to say, pilgrim, because it came from a traveller.

The secretary took leave of her, confused by such great liberality, and paid his respects to the three princes, with whom he remained some time, in order to gain such information as he could about them. He returned to make his report to the queen-mother, who was confirmed by it in her suspicions. He told her, that Cheri had no star, but that jewels fell from his hair, as from that of his brothers, and that in his opinion he was the handsomest. That they came from a great distance; that their father and mother had given them only a certain time to see foreign countries. This latter point rather staggered the queen, and she fancied sometimes, that they were not the king's children. She was thus wavering between fear and hope, when the king, who was very fond of hunting, rode by their house. The grand equerry, who accompanied him, told him in passing, that it was there, by his orders, he had lodged Belle-Etoile and her brothers. "The queen has advised me," replied the king, "not to see them; she fears that they come from some country where the plague rages, and that they might have brought the infection with them." "The fair young stranger," replied the grand equerry, "is indeed very dangerous; but, sire, I should fear her eyes more than the plague." "In sooth," said the king, "I agree with you," and immediately putting spurs to his horse, he heard the sounds of instruments and of voices; he drew up near a large saloon, the windows of which were open, and after having listened with great pleasure to a sweet symphony, he advanced again.

The sound of horses induced the princes to look out: as soon as they saw the king, they saluted him respectfully, and hastening to the door, received him with joyful countenances and many marks of reverence, falling at his feet and embracing his knees, while the princess kissed his hands as though she recognised him as their father. He embraced them fervently, and his heart was so agitated, he could not imagine the cause of it. He told them, that they must come to the palace, that he wished them to be his guests, and to present them to his mother. They thanked him for the honour he had done them, and assured him that as soon as their dresses and their equipages were ready they would not fail to come to the court.

[1] An amusing derivation for this celebrated jewel, which Madame d'Aulnoy saw Marie d'Orleans, queen of Charles the Second of Spain, wear on her entry into Madrid, January 13, 1680.

The king quitted them to finish the chase which he had begun; he kindly sent them half the game, and took the rest to the queen. "How," said she, "is it possible you have had so little sport? You generally kill three times as much game." "Very true," replied the king, "but I have presented some to the handsome strangers. I feel so much affection for them, that it quite surprises me; and if you had not been so alarmed at the idea of contagion, I should have invited them to the palace before this." The queen-mother was very angry; she accused him of failing in respect to her, and reproached him for having so carelessly exposed himself.

As soon as he had left her, she sent for Feintise to come and speak to her; she shut herself in her closet with her, and seized her by the hair, putting a dagger to her throat: "Wretched woman," said she, "I know not what should prevent my sacrificing thee to my just resentment,—thou hast betrayed me; thou hast not killed the four children I placed in thy hands to make away with. Confess thy crime, and perhaps I may forgive thee." Feintise, half dead with terror, threw herself at her feet, and told her all that had taken place; that she thought it impossible that the children were still alive, for so frightful a tempest had arisen, that she had herself been nearly killed by the hail; but at all events she prayed for time, and she would find means to do away with them, one after the other, without any one suspecting it.

The queen, who sought but their death, was slightly appeased: she told her not to lose a moment about it; and indeed, old Feintise, who found herself in great danger, did all that depended upon her; she watched for the opportunity when the princes went hunting, and taking a guitar under her arm, she went and sat down opposite the princess's windows, and sang the following words:—

"Beauty hath o'er all things sway,
Profit by it while you may;
Youth soon flies,
Beauty dies,
And frosty age blights every flower.
Ah, what woe
It is to know.
That we to please have lost the power?
In despair we rail at Fate,
And strive to charm when all too late.

"Youthful hearts, your time improve,
Yours the season is for love;
Youth soon flies,
Beauty dies,
And frosty age blights every flower.
Ah, what woe
It is to know,
That we to please have lost the power!
In despair we rail at Fate,
And strive to charm, when all too late."

Belle-Etoile thought the words were very pretty; she went to the balcony to see who it was singing. As soon as she appeared, Feintise, who had dressed herself very neatly, made her a low courtesy; the princess bowed in her turn, and as she was in a lively

humour, asked her if the words she had just heard were made upon herself. "Yes, charming young lady," replied Feintise, "they were made upon me; but that such may never be made upon you, I come to give you some advice, that you ought to profit by." "And what is it?" said Belle-Etoile. "If you will permit me to ascend to your chamber," added she, "you shall know." "You can come up," replied the princess. The old woman immediately presented herself with a certain courtly air that is never lost, when once acquired.

"My fair child," said Feintise, not losing a moment (for she was afraid some one might come and interrupt her), "Heaven has made you very lovely—you are endowed with a brilliant star on your forehead; and they tell me many other wonderful things of you; but you yet want one thing which is essentially necessary to you; if you have it not, I pity you." "And what is it I need?" replied she. "The dancing water," added our malicious old woman; "if I had possessed it, you would not have seen a white hair upon my head, nor a wrinkle on my face. I should have had the most beautiful teeth in the world, with the most charming infantile manner. Alas! I knew this secret too late, my charms had already faded; profit by my misfortune, my dear child, it will be a consolation to me, for I feel a most extraordinary affection for you." "But where shall I find this dancing water?" replied Belle-Etoile. "It is in the luminous forest," said Feintise. You have three brothers; does not any one of them love you sufficiently to go and fetch some? Truly they must have very little affection for you—in fact, it is a matter of no less consequence to you, than the preservation of your beauty for ever." My brothers all love me," said the princess; "but there is one of them who would not refuse me anything. Certainly if this water possesses all the power you describe, I will reward you according to its value." The perfidious old woman retired in haste, enchanted at having been so successful. She told Belle-Etoile that she should be sure to come and see her.

The princes returned from the chase, one brought a young wild boar, another a hare, and the third a stag; they laid all the spoil at their sister's feet, but she looked upon this homage with a sort of disdain, she was engrossed by the advice of Feintise. Her anxiety about it was even apparent, and Cheri, who had no other occupation than studying her humour, was not a quarter of an hour in her company without remarking it. "What is the matter, my dear Etoile?" said he; "the country we are in is not perhaps to your liking. If such is the case let us depart immediately; or perhaps our equipage is not grand enough, the furniture not sufficiently beautiful, or the table as delicately served as you like—speak, I intreat you, that I may have the pleasure of being the first to obey you, and making the others do so likewise."

"The encouragement you give me to tell you what is passing in my mind," replied she, "induces me to declare to you, that I can no longer exist without the dancing water. It is in the luminous forest—possessing it, I shall have nothing to dread from the ravages of years." "Do not grieve yourself, my charming Etoile," said he; "I will go and bring you some of this water, or you will know by my death that it was impos-

sible to obtain it." "No," said she, "I would rather renounce all the advantages of beauty—I would much rather be frightful than hazard so precious a life—I intreat you not to think of the dancing water any more, and indeed, if I have any power over you, I forbid you to go."

The prince pretended to obey her; but as soon as he perceived she was engaged, he mounted his white horse, which bounded and curveted continually. He provided himself with money and a rich dress; as for diamonds, his hair could furnish him with enough, and passing the comb through it thrice would sometimes produce a million; for the supply was not always the same: they were aware even that the state of their mind, or that of their health, regulated the quantity of the jewels. He took no one with him, that he might feel more at liberty, and that, if the adventure should prove a perilous one, he could hazard its accomplishment without exposing himself to the remonstrances of a zealous and timid attendant.

When supper time arrived and the princess did not see her brother Cheri, she felt so uneasy she could neither eat nor drink; she desired he might be sought for everywhere. The two princes, knowing nothing of the dancing water, begged her not to distress herself so much; that he could not be far off, that she knew he was fond of indulging in profound reveries, and that he was no doubt in the forest. She was therefore comparatively easy till midnight, but after that she lost all patience, and, with tears in her eyes, told her brothers that she was the cause of Cheri's absence, that she had expressed a great wish to have some of the dancing water from the luminous forest, and that certainly he had gone there. At this intelligence they determined to send several persons after him, and she charged them to tell him she implored him to return.

In the meantime, the wicked Feintise was very anxious to know the result of her advice. When she heard that Cheri had already set out she was delighted, not doubting that he would make more speed than those who followed him, and that some mischief would befall him. She ran to the palace, full of this hope, and reported to the queen-mother all that had passed. "I admit, madam," said she, "that I can no longer doubt that they are the three princes and their sister. They have stars upon their foreheads, chains of gold round their necks; their hair is most beautiful, and jewels continually fall from it. I have seen the princess adorned with some which I put into her cradle, although not so valuable as those that fall from her hair. I no longer therefore doubt their return, notwithstanding the care I had taken to prevent it; but, madam, I will rid you of them, and as it is the only means of repairing my fault, I intreat you to give me but time: one of the princes is already gone to seek the dancing water; he will no doubt perish in the attempt, and I shall find similar means to do away with all of them." "We shall see," said the queen, "whether the success will answer your expectations; but rely upon it, by that alone will you escape my just rage." Feintise returned more alarmed than ever, racking her brain to think how she could destroy them.

The plan she had adopted with regard to Prince Cheri was one of the most certain,

for the dancing water was not easily to be obtained; it was so notorious from the misfortunes which occurred to all who sought it, that every one knew the road to it. His white horse went astonishingly fast, and he did not spare it, as he was so anxious to return quickly to Belle-Etoile, and gratify her by the successful result of his journey. He was eight days and nights without taking any repose but in the woods, under the first tree he came to, without eating anything but the wild fruit he found in his road, scarcely allowing his horse time to graze. At the end of this period he arrived in a country where he began to suffer very much from the heat; but it was not that the sun was more powerful, and he did not know to what cause to attribute it, when from the top of a mountain he perceived the luminous forest; all the trees were burning without being consumed, and casting out flames to such a distance, that the country around was a dry desert. In this forest was to be heard the hissing of serpents and the roaring of lions, which astonished the prince excessively, for it appeared to him impossible that any animal but a salamander could live in this sort of furnace.

After contemplating for some time this terrible scene, he descended, ruminating on what was to be done, and more than once gave himself up for lost. As he approached this great fire he was ready to die with thirst; he perceived a spring issuing from a mountain, and falling into a marble basin; he alighted from his horse, approached it, and stooped to take up some water in a little golden vase which he had brought with him, intending to fill it with some of that which the princess wished for, when he perceived a turtle-dove drowning in the fountain: its feathers were quite wet, it had lost all power, and was sinking to the bottom of the basin. Cheri took pity on it, and saved it. At first he held it by its feet, for it had swallowed so much water it was quite swollen; he then warmed it in his bosom, dried its wings with a fine handkerchief, and treated it with such skill that the poor dove, in a few minutes, was more gay than she had just been sorrowful.

"My Lord Cheri," she said, in sweet and gentle accents, "you never obliged a more grateful little creature than I am; this is not the first time I have received essential favours from your family. I am enchanted that, in my turn, I can be of service to you. Think not that I am ignorant of the cause of your journey—you have undertaken it a little rashly, for it would be impossible to say how many have perished here! The dancing water is the eighth wonder of the world for ladies; it beautifies them, makes them young again, and enriches them; but if I were not to be your guide, you would never arrive at it, for the spring rises in the middle of the forest, and gushing out violently, precipitates itself into a deep chasm, the path down to which is covered by branches of trees so twined and twisted together, that I scarcely see any way of getting thither but by going underground. Rest yourself here, and do not be uneasy; I will go and order whatever may be required."

At the same moment the dove rose up in the air, went away, returned, alighted, and flew backwards and forwards so often, that by the end of the day she was able to inform the prince that everything was ready. He took the friendly bird, kissed it, caressed it,

thanked it, and followed it upon his white horse. He had scarcely gone a hundred yards before he saw two long files of foxes, badgers, moles, snails, ants, and all sorts of creatures that burrow in the earth; there was such an enormous quantity that he could not conceive by what power they were thus assembled. "It is by my order," said the dove, "you see all these little subterranean people here; they have been working for you with the greatest diligence, and you will do me the favour to thank them." The prince saluted them, and told them he would fain see them in a less barren place, where he should be happy to entertain them. Each animal appeared gratified by this compliment.

Cheri got off his horse at the entrance of the subterranean passage they had made for him, and stooping till he was nearly double, groped his way after the kind dove, which safely conducted him to the fountain: it made so much noise that he would have been deafened had not the dove given him two of her white feathers, with which he stopped up his ears. He was wonderfully surprised to see this water dance as correctly as though Favier and Pecourt[1] had taught it. It is true they were but old dances, such as the Bocane, the Mariée, and the Saraband.[2] Several birds, flying about, sang the airs the water wished to dance to. The prince filled his golden vase; he took two draughts of it, which made him a hundred times handsomer than he was previously, and which refreshed him so much that he scarcely felt that the luminous forest was the hottest place in the world.

He returned the same way he came. His horse had strayed, but, knowing his voice, returned at full gallop as soon as he called to him. The prince leapt lightly upon his back, quite proud at possessing the dancing water. "Gentle dove," said he, as he held her, "I know not by what miracle you have so much authority in this place, but I am very grateful for the benefit I have received from it; and as liberty is the greatest of blessings, I restore you to yours, in return for the favours you have conferred on me." So saying, he let her go. She flew away with an air as fierce as though he had detained her against her will. "How capricious!" exclaimed he mentally. "Thou resemblest a human being more than a turtle-dove,—the one is inconstant, the other is not." The dove replied to him, although high in air, "Ah! do you know who I am?"

Cheri was astonished that the dove had thus answered his thoughts; he was convinced she was very clever, and was sorry he had let her go. "She would have been useful to me," said he; "and I might have learnt from her many things that would have contributed to my happiness." However, he considered within himself that one

[1] Celebrated dancers of that day. The names of Favier and Pecourt both appear in the lists of the dancers in the tragic ballet of Psyche; and Favier sustained several characters in the magnificent Fête de Versailles, July 18, 1668. There were two Faviers, 'l'ainé," and "le cadet;" the senior is most probably the one alluded to.

[2] The Bocane was a stately kind of dance, so called from Bocan, the dancing-master of Anne of Austria, queen of Louis XIII., who invented it. La Mariée, was a branle or brawl (see p. 357) so called; it is mentioned by Madame d'Aulnoy in her story of "Le Gentilhomme Bourgeois." The Saraband has been described, note, p. 53. It was generally accompanied by the castanets.

should never regret doing a good action; and he felt he was much indebted to her, when he reflected on the difficulties she had enabled him to surmount in obtaining the dancing water. The mouth of the golden vase was so perfectly secured, that he could not spill the water, nor would it evaporate. He was amusing himself by thinking how delighted Belle-Etoile would be to receive it, and what joy it would be to him to see her again, when he saw coming at full speed several cavaliers, who no sooner perceived him than they uttered loud shouts, pointing him out to one another. He was void of fear—his soul was of that intrepid character, it could not easily be shaken by any danger; still he was annoyed to be stopped by anything. He spurred his horse towards them, and was agreeably surprised to recognise some of his domestics, who presented him with several little notes—or, I should rather say, orders—the princess had given them for him, to tell him not to expose himself to the dangers of the luminous forest. He kissed Belle-Etoile's writing; he sighed more than once, and hastened to return to her, to relieve her from further anxiety.

On his arrival, he found her seated under some trees, where she had abandoned herself to her sorrow. When she saw him at her feet, she knew not how to welcome him: she wanted to scold him for acting contrary to her orders; she wished to thank him for the charming present he had made her: in fine, her affection prevailed. She embraced her dear brother, and her reproaches were not very severe.

The old Feintise, who was always on the watch, knew by her spies that Cheri had returned, handsomer than he was before he went away; and that the princess, having washed her face with the dancing water, had become so excessively lovely, one could scarcely look at her without dying half-a-dozen deaths.

Feintise was much astonished and much afflicted, for she had made up her mind that the prince would perish in so great an enterprise; but it was no time to be discouraged. She watched the moment when the princess went to a little temple of Diana, with few attendants. She accosted her, and, with an air of great friendship, said: "How delighted I am, madam, at the happy effect of my advice! One might know, by looking at you, that you at present use the dancing water; but if I dare counsel you further, you ought to make yourself mistress of the singing apple. It is quite a different thing; for it embellishes the wit so much, that it enables you to do anything. If you wish to persuade any one you have only to smell the singing apple: would you speak in public, make verses, write prose, be amusing, draw tears, or cause laughter, the apple has all these virtues; and it sings so well and so loud, that one can hear it eight leagues off, without being stunned by it."

"I will have none of it," cried the princess; "you thought to kill my brother by your dancing water: your advice is too dangerous." "What, madam!" replied Feintise, "would you be sorry to become the wisest and wittiest person in the world? Truly, you cannot mean that." "Ah! what should I have done," continued Belle-Etoile, "if they had brought me my dear brother, dead or dying?" "He should not go any more," said the old woman; "the others ought to oblige you in their turn, and the

enterprise is not so dangerous." "Never mind," said the princess, "I do not feel inclined to expose them." "Indeed, I pity you," said Feintise, "to lose so advantageous an opportunity; but you will reflect upon it. Adieu, madam!" She then retired, very anxious about the success of her argument; and Belle-Etoile remained at the feet of the statue of Diana, irresolute what to do. She loved her brothers; she loved herself also: she felt that nothing would give her so much pleasure as to possess the singing apple.

She sighed for some time, and then she began to weep. Petit-Soleil, returning from the chase, heard a noise in the temple; he entered it, and saw the princess, who covered her face with her veil, for she was ashamed to be seen with tears in her eyes; and, approaching her, he intreated her to tell him instantly why she was crying. She refused to do so, saying she was ashamed of herself; but the more she refused, the more desirous he was to know.

At last she told him, that the same old woman who had advised her to send for the dancing water, had just told her that the singing apple was still more wonderful, as it would give her so much wit, she would become a sort of prodigy, and that she really would almost give her life for such an apple; but she feared there would be too much danger in getting it. "You will have no fear for me, I assure you," said her brother, smiling; "for I am not at all anxious to render you this good service! What! have you not wit enough! Come, come, my sister," continued he, "and do not distress yourself about it!"

Belle-Etoile followed him, as much distressed by the manner in which he had received her confidence, as by the impossibility there appeared of her possessing the singing apple. Supper was served; they all four sat down to table: she could not eat. Cheri,—the amiable Cheri,—who had no thought but for her, helped her to the nicest morsels, and pressed her to taste them. Her heart was full—tears came to her eyes—she left the table, weeping. Belle-Etoile weeping! Ye gods, what unhappiness for Cheri! He asked what was the matter with her? Petit-Soleil told him in a jeering manner, which was very offensive to his sister; she was so hurt, that she retired to her room, and would not speak to any one all the evening.

As soon as Petit-Soleil and Heureux were gone to bed, Cheri mounted his excellent horse, without saying a word to any one; he left only a letter for Belle-Etoile, with an order that it might be given to her when she awoke; and, dark as the night was, he rode at random, not in the least knowing where to find the singing apple.

As soon as the princess arose, they delivered the letter to her—it is easy to imagine all the anxiety and tenderness she felt upon such an occasion. She ran into her brothers' chamber to read the letter to them; they shared her grief, for they were a very united family; and they immediately sent nearly all their people after him to induce him to return, without attempting the adventure which doubtless would be terrible.

In the meanwhile, the king did not forget the lovely children of the forest; his walk was always directed towards their abode, and when he passed by it and saw them, he reproached them for never going to the palace. They excused themselves, by saying,

they had not completed their equipage; that their brother's absence prevented them, and assuring him that at his return they should profit by the permission he had given them, of paying their respects to him.

The Prince Cheri was too much urged by his passion not to make all possible speed; at break of day he perceived a handsome young man, who, reclining under some trees, was reading a book; he addressed him, very civilly, and said, "Give me leave to interrupt you: to ask you, if you know in what place I shall find the singing apple?" The young man raised his eyes, and smiling graciously, said, "Do you wish to obtain it?" "Yes, if it be possible," replied the prince. "Ah! my lord," replied the stranger, "you are not aware, then, of the dangers attending the undertaking; here is a book that mentions it; it makes one tremble to read it." "No matter for that," said Cheri, "the danger will not dismay me,—only inform me where I shall find it." "This book indicates," continued the young man, "that it is in a vast desert in Libya; that one can hear it sing eight leagues off; and that the dragon, which guards it, has already devoured five hundred thousand persons, who have had the temerity to go there." "I shall make the number five hundred thousand and one," replied the prince, smiling; and saluting him, set forward towards the deserts of Libya; his fine horse, which was of the Zephyrine race, for Zephyr was his grandsire, went like the wind; so that the prince's progress was incredibly swift. He listened in vain; he could not hear the singing of the apple anywhere; he was distressed at the length of the way and the inutility of his journey, when he perceived a poor turtle-dove fall at his feet; it was not dead, but very nearly so. As he saw no one who could have wounded it, he thought, perhaps, it belonged to Venus, and having escaped from its dovecote, little mischievous Love, to try his arrows, had let fly at it. He had pity on it, and alighted from his horse; he took it and wiped its white wings stained with blood, and taking from his pocket a little gold bottle which contained an admirable balsam for wounds, he had scarcely applied some of it to that of the poor dove, when it opened its eyes, raised its head, stretched out its wings and plumed itself, then looking at the prince, said, "Good day, handsome Cheri, you are destined to save my life, and I to do you signal service.

"You are come to seek for the singing apple—the enterprise is difficult and worthy of you, for it is guarded by a terrible dragon which has twelve feet, three heads, six wings, and a brazen body." "Ah! my dear dove," said the prince, "how happy I am to see you again, and at a time when your assistance is so necessary to me. Do not refuse it to me, my lovely little creature; for I should die of grief, if I should have to return without the singing apple; and as I obtained the dancing water through your means, I hope that you will find some other that will enable me to succeed in my present enterprise." "You touch me nearly," replied the dove, "follow me—I will fly before you—I hope all will be well."

The prince let her go. After travelling all day long, they arrived close to a mountain of sand. "You must dig here," said the dove. The prince, without any demur, immediately began digging, sometimes with his hands, sometimes with his sword. After working for several hours, he found a helmet, a cuirass, and the rest of a suit of armour, with harness for his horse, all of glass. "Arm yourself, and fear nothing from the dragon," said the dove; "when he sees himself in all these mirrors, he will be so frightened, that, believing they are monsters like himself, he will take flight."

Cheri very much approved of this expedient. He put on the glass armour, and taking the dove again, they proceeded all through the night together. At break of day they heard a most enchanting melody. The prince begged the dove to tell him what it was. "I am persuaded," said she, "that nothing else but the apple could be so melodious; for it plays all the different parts of music of itself, and without touching any instrument, it appears to perform on them in a most enchanting manner." They approached nearer to it. The prince thought within himself, how he wished the apple would sing something applicable to his own situation. At the same moment he heard these words:—

"Love can the most rebellious heart subdue,
Then struggle not to drive him from thy breast;
However cruel she whom you pursue,
Love on, still bravely, and you will be blest."

"Ah!" cried he, answering these lines, "what a charming prediction! I may then hope to be one day happier than I am now; I have just been assured so." The dove made no reply to this; it was not born a prattler, and never spoke but when absolutely necessary. As he advanced, the beauty of the music increased; and notwithstanding the haste the prince was in, he was sometimes so delighted, that he stopped to listen, not thinking of anything else; but the sight of the terrible dragon, which suddenly appeared, with his twelve feet, and more than a hundred talons, his three heads, and his brazen body, aroused him from this sort of lethargy. He had smelt the prince from afar off, and expected to devour him, as he had every one who had preceded him, and upon whom he had made some excellent meals. Their bones were piled around the apple tree, upon which was the beautiful apple, and they were heaped up so high, that it was not possible to see it.

The frightful animal came bounding along, covering the ground with a froth which was very poisonous: out of his infernal throat issued fire and young dragons, which he

hurled like darts in the eyes and ears of the knights-errant who wished to carry away the apple. But when he saw his alarming figure multiplied a hundred and a hundred times in the prince's mirrors, it was he that was frightened in his turn. He stopped, and looking fiercely at the prince laden with dragons, he took flight. Cheri, perceiving the happy effect of his armour, pursued him to the entrance of a deep chasm, into which the monster precipitated himself to avoid him. The prince closed up the aperture securely, and returned with all speed to the singing apple. After mounting upon the top of all the bones that surrounded it, he looked with admiration upon the beautiful tree; it was of amber, the apples being topazes, and the most beautiful of all, which he sought so carefully and at so much peril, appeared at the top, composed of a single ruby, with a crown of diamonds upon it. The prince, transported with joy at being able to give Belle-Etoile so perfect and rare a treasure, quickly broke the amber branch, and, quite proud of his good fortune, mounted his white horse; but he could nowhere see the dove—she had flown away as soon as there was no further need of her assistance. Without losing any more time in unavailing regrets, and as he feared the dragon, whose hissings he heard, would find some means of getting back to the apples, he returned with his prize to the princess.

She had never slept during his absence; she incessantly reproached herself for wishing to possess greater wit than others; she feared for Cheri's life more than her own. "Ah! unfortunate being that I am," cried she, sighing heavily, "why was I so conceited? Was it not sufficient that I could think and speak well enough, not to do or say anything absurd? I shall be well punished for my pride, if I lose him I love. Alas!" continued she, "the gods, displeased perhaps at my love for Cheri, will take him from me by some tragical end."

There was no evil that her afflicted heart did not imagine would befall him, when in the middle of the night she heard such lovely music, that she could not resist rising and going to the window, to hear it better; she knew not what to think of it. At one time she believed it must be Apollo and the Muses; at another, Venus, the Graces, and the Loves. The symphony approached nearer, and Belle-Etoile continued to listen. At length the prince arrived. It was beautifully moonlight. He stopped beneath the princess's balcony, who had retired upon seeing a cavalier in the distance. The apple immediately sang, "Awake, lovely sleeper."[1] The princess, from curiosity, looked out instantly to see who was singing so well; and, recognising her beloved brother, was ready to throw herself from the window, to be sooner beside him. She spoke so loud, that everybody was awakened, and they went to let Cheri in. One may imagine the haste with which he entered. He held in his hand the amber branch, at the end of

[1] "Réveillez-vous, belle endormie." There is an old French song quoted by Dryden, in his comedy, "The Assignation," Act ii. Scene 3, which runs thus:—

"Eveillez-vous, belles endormies,
Eveillez-vous, car il est jour;
Mettez la tête à la fenestre,
Vous entendrez parler d'amour."

which was the wonderful fruit; and as he had often smelt it, his wit was increased so much that nothing in the world could compare to him.

Belle-Etoile ran to meet him eagerly. "Do you believe that I thank you, my dear brother?" said she, crying with joy. "No, there is nothing that I do not buy too dearly when I expose you to obtain it for me." "There are no dangers," replied he, "I would not brave to give you the slightest gratification. Accept, Belle-Etoile," he continued, "accept this singular fruit; no one in the world deserves it so much as you do; but what can it bestow on you more than you already possess?" Petit-Soleil and his brother came and interrupted this conversation. They were delighted to see the prince again. He gave them an account of his journey, which lasted till the morning.

The wicked Feintise had just returned to her little cottage after discoursing with the queen-mother upon her projects. She was too uneasy to sleep quietly. She heard the sweet singing of the apple, that nothing in nature could equal. She felt sure that it had been obtained! She cried, she groaned, she scratched her face, she tore her hair; her grief was excessive, for instead of doing harm to these lovely children, as she intended, she did them good by all her perfidious counsels. As soon as it was day she learned but too truly that the prince had returned. She went to the queen-mother. "Well, Feintise," said this princess, "dost thou bring me good news? Have the children perished?" "No, madam," said she, throwing herself at her feet; "but let not your majesty be impatient, I have yet left an infinite number of means by which I may yet get rid of them." "Ah! wretched creature," said the queen, "thou livest but to betray me; thou sparest them." The old woman protested to the contrary; and when she had appeased her slightly, she returned home, to consider what was to be done.

She allowed some days to pass by without showing herself; and at the end of that time she watched so well that she encountered the princess walking in the forest alone, waiting for her brothers. "Heaven crowns you with blessings, charming Etoile," said this wicked woman, accosting her. "I have heard that you are in possession of the singing apple. I could not have been more delighted had such good fortune happened to myself, for I must own I feel a great interest in all that tends to your advantage; but," continued she, "I must now give you another piece of advice." "Ah! keep your advice to yourself," said the princess, hurrying away from her, "for whatever good it may bring me, it does not recompense me for the anxiety I suffer in consequence of it."

"Anxiety is not so great an evil," replied Feintise, smiling. "There are sweet and tender anxieties." "Say no more," added Belle-Etoile; "I tremble when I think of it." "Truly," said the old woman, "you are much to be pitied for being the loveliest and most intellectual girl in the world." "I must intreat your pardon, once for all," replied the princess. "I know too well the state my brother's absence reduced me to." "I must, notwithstanding, assure you," continued Feintise, "that you still need the little green bird which tells everything: he would inform you of your birth, of your good and ill fortune; there is nothing, however secret, that he will not find out for you; and when the world says, 'Belle-Etoile possesses the dancing water and the singing apple,' it will

say at the same time 'but she has not the little green bird which tells everything, and without that she might almost as well have nothing.'"

Having thus said all she intended, she retired. The princess, sad and thoughtful, began to sigh bitterly. "This woman is right," said she; "what advantage can arise from my possessing the water and the apple, if I know not who I am, who are my parents, and by what fatality my brothers and I were exposed to the fury of the waves? There must be something very extraordinary in our births that we should have been thus abandoned; and the interposition of Providence alone could have preserved us in such perils. What delight it would be to know my father and mother, to cherish them if they are still living, and to honour their memory if dead!" Upon which tears rolled down her cheeks, like drops of morning dew bathing the lilies and roses.

Cheri, who was always more impatient to see her than either of the others, hurried back as soon as the chase was over. He was on foot; his bow hung negligently by his side; he had some arrows in his hand; his long hair confined by a ribbon. In this guise he had a martial air, which was infinitely charming. As soon as the princess saw him she turned into a dark walk, that he might not observe the traces of grief upon her face, which a lover would be sure to detect. The prince joined her. He scarcely looked at her before he knew she was in some trouble. He was greatly distressed at it. He begged, he implored her to tell him what was the matter. She obstinately refused to do so. At last, he turned the point of one of the arrows to his heart, saying, "You do not love me, Belle-Etoile, and I have nothing to do but to die." The manner in which he spoke alarmed her so desperately that she could no longer refuse to tell him her secret; but she revealed it only on condition that he would not again risk his life by endeavouring to satisfy her desires. He promised all she exacted of him, and betrayed no intention of undertaking this last journey.

As soon as Belle-Etoile had retired to her room and the princes to theirs, Cheri descended, took his horse out of the stable, mounted him, and set out without saying a word to any one. This news threw the charming family into great consternation. The king, who could not forget them, sent to beg they would come and dine with him; they replied that their brother had just left them, that they should feel neither happy nor comfortable without him; and that when he returned they would not fail to pay their duty at the palace. The princess was inconsolable; the dancing water and the singing apple had no longer any charms for her; nothing was amusing to her while Cheri was absent. The prince went wandering through the world, asking every one he met if they could tell him where he could find the little green bird that told everything: the greater number knew nothing about it, but he met with a venerable old man, who took him home with him and kindly examined a globe, the study of which was part of his profession as well as his amusement. He then told him it was in a frozen climate, situated upon the top of a frightful rock, and showed him the route he must take. The prince, in gratitude for this information, gave him a little bag, full of large pearls, that had fallen from his hair; and, taking leave of him, continued his journey.

At length, at dawn of day, he perceived the rock, which was very high and very steep, and upon the summit of it was the bird, speaking like an oracle, telling wonderful things. He thought that with a little dexterity it would be easy to catch it, for it seemed very tame. It went and came, hopping lightly from one point of the rock to another. The prince got off his horse, and climbed up very quietly, notwithstanding the roughness of the ascent, promising himself the pleasure of gratifying extremely his dear Belle-Etoile.

He was so close to the green bird that he thought he could lay hands on it, when suddenly the rock opened, and he fell into a spacious hall as motionless as a statue; he could neither stir, nor utter a complaint of his deplorable situation. Three hundred knights who had made the same attempt were in the same state. To look at each other was the only thing permitted them.

The time seemed so long to Belle-Etoile, and still no signs of her beloved Cheri, that she fell dangerously ill. The physicians saw plainly that she was being destroyed by a deep melancholy; her brothers loved her dearly: they asked her the reason of her illness; she acknowledged that she reproached herself night and day with being the cause of Cheri's absence, and that she felt she should die if she did not hear some tidings of him. They were affected by her tears: and in the hope of curing her, Petit-Soleil resolved to seek his brother.

The prince set out; he ascertained where this famed bird was to be found; he flew there; he saw it; he approached it with the same hopes as the others had done—at the same moment was swallowed up by the rock; he fell into the great hall; the first person he saw was Cheri, but he could not speak to him.

Belle-Etoile recovered her health a little; each moment she hoped to see her two brothers return, but her hopes disappointed, her distress was renewed—night and day she never ceased lamenting; she accused herself of her brothers' misfortunes; and Prince Heureux, having no less pity for her than anxiety about his brothers, resolved in his turn to go and seek them. He acquainted Belle-Etoile with his intention; at first she opposed it, but he told her it was but just that he should encounter any peril in trying to find those he

so dearly loved; thereupon he departed, having taken the most affectionate farewell of the princess; she remained alone, a prey to the deepest sorrow.

When Feintise was aware that the third prince was gone she was exceedingly delighted; she told the queen-mother of it, and promised her, more confidently than ever, that she would destroy the whole of this unfortunate family! Heureux shared the same fate as Cheri and Petit-Soleil—he found the rock, he saw the bird, he fell like a statue into the hall, where he recognised the princes he was seeking without being able to speak to them; they were all arranged in crystal niches; they never slept, they never ate, but remained in a miserable state of enchantment, for they were only at liberty to think upon, and, in silence, deplore their fate.

Belle-Etoile, inconsolable at finding not one of her brothers return, reproached herself for having so long delayed to follow them. Without further hesitation she gave orders to all her household to wait for six months, when, if neither her brothers nor herself had returned during that time, they were to go and acquaint the corsair and his wife of their death; she then dressed herself in male attire, believing she would be less exposed to danger in travelling thus disguised than if she roamed the world as an adventurer of her own sex. Feintise saw her depart upon her beautiful horse; she was overjoyed, and ran to the palace, to delight the queen-mother with this good news.

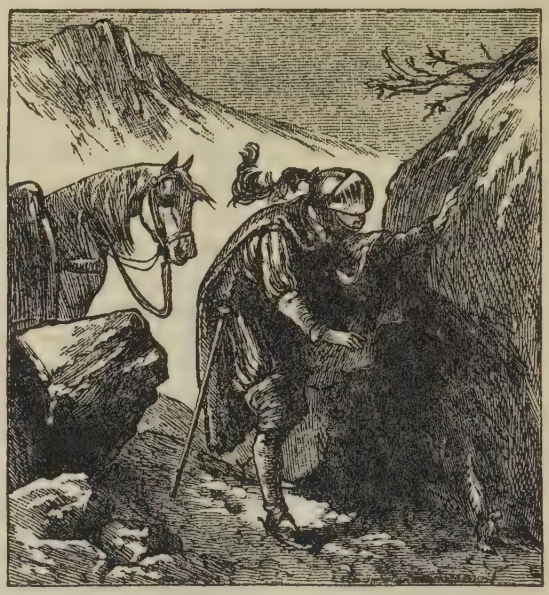
The princess had no other armour than a helmet, the vizor of which she scarcely ever raised, for her beauty was of so delicate and perfect a description that no one would have believed (as she wished they should) that she was a cavalier. It was a very severe winter, and the country in which the talking bird was, never, in any season, felt the happy influence of the sun!

Belle-Etoile was dreadfully cold, but nothing could deter her progress, when she saw a turtle-dove, scarcely less white or colder than the snow upon which it lay extended. Notwithstanding her impatience to arrive at the rock, she could not leave it thus to die, and getting off her horse she took it up, warmed it with her breath, and then put it into her bosom: the poor little thing never moved, Belle-Etoile thought it was dead, which she was very sorry for; she took it out again, and looking at it, said, as though it could understand her, "What shall I do, sweet dove, to save thy life?" "Belle-Etoile," replied the bird, "one sweet kiss from your lips will complete the charitable work you have begun." "Not only one," said the princess, "but a hundred, if they are needed." She kissed it, and the dove reviving, gaily said: "I know you, in spite of your disguise; learn that you have undertaken a thing it would be impossible for you to succeed in without my assistance; follow, therefore, my advice: as soon as you have arrived at the rock, instead of trying to ascend it, remain at the bottom of it, and begin to sing the best and sweetest song you know; the green bird that tells everything will listen to you, and observe from whence the voice proceeds; you must then pretend to go to sleep; I will be near you; when it sees me it will come down from the point of the rock to peck me, at that moment you will be able to seize it."

The princess, enchanted at this hope, speedily arrived at the rock; she recognised

her brothers' horses grazing; at sight of them her grief was renewed, she sat down, and cried bitterly for some time; but the little green bird said so many beautiful things, so consolatory to the unfortunate, that there was no afflicted heart it did not relieve. She therefore dried her tears, and began to sing so loud and so well, that the princes had the pleasure of hearing her in their enchanted hall.

From that moment they felt that there was some hope. The green bird that tells everything listened, and looked about to find where the voice came from; it perceived the princess, who had taken off her helmet, that she might sleep more comfortably, and the dove, who kept flying around her. At this sight it gently descended, and came to peck it, but it had not torn out three feathers before it was taken itself.



"Ah! what would you do with me?" it said; "what have I done to you that you should come from such a distance to render me miserable? Grant me my liberty, I intreat you, and I will do anything you wish in exchange." "I wish," said Belle-Etoile, "that thou wouldst restore my three brothers to me. I know not where they are, but as their horses are feeding near this rock I am sure thou detainest them somewhere hereabouts." "Under my left wing there is a red feather, pull it out," said the bird, "and touch the rock with it." The princess hastened to do as it instructed her; at the same instant she saw such lightning, and heard such a roar of thunder and wind together, that she was dreadfully frightened. Notwithstanding her alarm she still kept tight hold of the green bird, thinking it might escape her; she touched the rock again with the red feather, and the third time it split from the top to the bottom: she entered with a victorious air the hall in which stood the three princes with many others; she ran towards Cheri; he did not know her in her helmet and male attire, and as the enchantment was not yet ended, he could neither speak nor move. The princess, seeing this, put fresh questions to the green bird, to which it replied that she must rub the eyes and mouth of all those she wished to disenchant with the red feather, which good office she did to several kings and sovereign personages, and especially to our three princes.

Grateful for so important a benefit, they all threw themselves at her feet, calling her the Liberator of Kings. She then discovered that her brothers, deceived by her dress,

did not at all recognise her; she instantly took off her helmet, held out her arms to them, and embraced them a hundred times: she then asked the other princes with much kindness who they were; each of them told her their own adventure, and offered to accompany her wherever she wished to go: she replied, that though the laws of chivalry might give her a right over the liberty she had just restored to them, she should not think of taking advantage of it. She then retired with the princes, that they might relate to each other what had happened to them since their separation.

The little green bird that tells everything interrupted them, to intreat Belle-Etoile to set him free; she immediately sought the dove to ask her advice, but she could not find her anywhere; she told the bird that she had suffered too much trouble and anxiety on his account to enjoy her conquest for so short a time. All four then mounted their horses, leaving the emperors and kings to walk, for as they had been there between two and three hundred years, their horses had perished.

The queen-mother, relieved from all the anxiety that the return of her lovely children had given her, renewed her attempts to persuade the king to marry again, and urged him so strongly, that she at last induced him to make choice of a princess of his own family. As it would be necessary to dissolve his marriage with the poor Queen Blondine, who had lived at her mother's country house with the three dogs, which she had named Chagrin, Mouron,[1] and Douleur, in consequence of all the misery they had caused her, the queen-mother sent for her; she got into the carriage, taking the whelps with her; she was dressed in black, with a long veil which fell down to her feet.

In this apparel she looked more beautiful than the sun, although she had become pale and thin, for she scarcely ever slept, and never ate but from complaisance, and every one pitied her poor mother; the king was so much affected that he dared not look at her, but when he remembered that he ran the risk of having no other heirs but these whelps, he consented to everything.

The marriage-day being fixed, the queen-mother, at the suggestion of the admiral's wife (who always hated her unfortunate sister), commanded the Queen Blondine to appear at the ceremony. Everything was done to make it grand and sumptuous, and as the king wished the strangers to witness this magnificence, he ordered his principal equerry to go and invite the beautiful children, and commanded him, in case they were not yet come back, to leave strict orders that they should be informed of his wish on their return.

The principal equerry went to seek them, but did not find them; but knowing the pleasure the king would have in seeing them, he left one of his gentlemen to wait for them, to conduct them to the palace without delay. The happy day—the day of the grand banquet—arrived, Belle-Etoile and the princes had returned; the gentleman related the king's history to them, that he had married a poor girl who was perfectly

[1] Mouron is the herb called pimpernel or burnet. I have not been able to find any property attributed to it, or superstition attached to it, that would account for Blondine's so naming one of her dogs. It may be simply from its similarity in sound to mourrant.

beautiful and virtuous, who had the misfortune to bring into the world three dogs; that he had sent her away, never to see her again, but that he loved her dearly; that he had passed fifteen years without listening to any proposition of marriage, but that the queen-mother and her subjects having urged him strongly, he had at length determined to marry a princess of the blood-royal, and that it was necessary they should repair immediately to the palace to assist at the ceremony. Belle-Etoile put on a rose-coloured velvet dress, trimmed with brilliants, her hair fell in large curls upon her shoulders, ornamented with knots of ribbons; the star upon her forehead shone splendidly; and the chain of gold around her neck, which could not be taken off, seemed to be of a metal more precious even than gold. Nothing to mortal eyes would have appeared more beautiful. Her brothers were attired with equal splendour, particularly Prince Cheri; there was something in his appearance which distinguished him especially. They all four went in a coach made of ebony and ivory; the inside was lined with cloth of gold, the cushions were of the same, embroidered with jewels; it was drawn by twelve white horses, the remainder of their equipage was incomparably beautiful. When Belle-Etoile and her brothers arrived, the delighted king went with all his court to receive them at the top of the stairs. The apple sang wonderfully well, the water danced, and the little bird that told everything spoke better than an oracle. All four knelt to the king, took his hand, and kissed it with as much respect as affection. He embraced them, and said, "I am much obliged to you, lovely strangers, for coming here to-day; your presence gives me great pleasure." With these words he conducted them into a grand saloon, where several musicians were performing, and various tables, splendidly furnished, left nothing to be desired in the way of good cheer.

The queen-mother arrived, accompanied by her future daughter-in-law, the admiral's wife, and a great number of ladies, and among them the poor queen, who had a long strap of leather round her neck, which also linked the three dogs to her. They conducted her into the middle of the saloon, where they had placed a cauldron filled with bones and bad meat, which the queen had ordered for their dinner.

When Belle-Etoile and the princes saw this unhappy princess, though they knew her not, tears rushed into their eyes, either from reflections upon the vicissitudes of this life, which affected them, or that they were touched by an instinct of nature, which will often make itself felt. But what did the wicked queen think of a return so unexpected, and so contrary to her wishes? She cast so furious a look at Feintise, that she sincerely desired the earth would open and swallow her up.

The king presented the beautiful children to his mother, saying a thousand kind things of them; and in spite of the uneasiness she endured, she received them graciously, and looked upon them as favourably as though she loved them, for dissimulation was in vogue even at that time. The feast passed off very gaily, although the king was very much distressed to see his wife eating with the whelps, as the meanest of all creatures; but having resolved to be as complaisant as possible to his mother, who obliged him to re-marry, he left everything to her orders.

At the end of the repast, the king addressed himself to Belle-Etoile. "I know," said he, "you are in possession of three treasures which are unequalled. I congratulate you, and I intreat you to relate to us how you acquired them." "Sire," replied she, "I shall obey you with pleasure. They told me the dancing water would make me beautiful, that the singing apple would give me wit. I wished to possess them for these two reasons. With respect to the little green bird that tells everything, I had a different one; we know nothing of our fatal birth—we are children who have been abandoned by our relatives—we know of none that exist. I hoped that this wonderful bird would enlighten us upon a matter which we think of night and day." "Judging of your birth by yourself," said the king, "it ought to be most illustrious; but in truth, who are you?" "Sire," she said, "my brothers and myself deferred asking the bird that question till our return; when we arrived we received your commands to come to your wedding; all that I could do was to bring you these three curiosities to amuse you."

"I am very glad of that," said the king; "do not let us defer anything that will be so entertaining." "You amuse yourself with every foolish thing that is proposed to you," said the queen-mother angrily. "Here are pleasant marmosets indeed with their rarities! Truly the very name is enough to prove that nothing could be more ridiculous. Fie, fie. I do not choose that these petty strangers, apparently the dregs of the people, should have the power of abusing your credulity. The whole of this is but an affair of juggling with sacks and cups, and but for you they would never have had the honour of sitting at my table."

Belle-Etoile and her brothers, hearing this offensive language, knew not what to imagine; their faces flushed with confusion and despair at being thus insulted before all this grand court. But the king, telling his mother that this proceeding was an outrage to him, begged the beautiful children not to feel hurt at it, and held out his hand in token of friendship. Belle-Etoile took a glass basin, and poured all the dancing water into it; immediately they perceived the water was agitated, it skipped about to and fro, heaving like an angry little sea; it varied its colour, and made the basin move the length of the king's table; then suddenly it spurted out and sprinkled the chief equerry's face, to whom the children were under obligations. He was a man of great merit, but he was very ugly, and he had likewise lost an eye. As soon as the water touched him he became so handsome, no one recognised him, and his eye was restored. The king, who loved him dearly, was as much delighted at this occurrence as the queen-mother was displeased to hear the applause that was bestowed upon the princess. After silence was restored, Belle-Etoile placed the singing apple upon the water; it was made out of a single ruby, surrounded by diamonds, with a branch of amber; it commenced so harmonious a concert, that a hundred musicians would have been less effective. This enchanted the king and all his court, whose admiration increased when Belle-Etoile drew from her muff a little golden cage, of beautiful workmanship, in which was the green bird that told everything; it was fed upon diamond dust, and drank only the water from distilled pearls. She took it very gently and placed it on the apple, which

was silent out of respect, and to give the bird the opportunity of talking; its feathers were so beautifully delicate, that they were ruffled by people even shutting and opening their eyes near it. They were of all the shades of green that could be imagined. The bird addressed itself to the king, and asked him what he would like to know? "We should like to learn," said the king, "who this beautiful girl and these three cavaliers are?" "Oh, king," answered the green bird with a loud and intelligible voice, "she is thy daughter, and two of these princes are thy sons, the third, called Cheri, is thy nephew;" and it then related with wonderful eloquence the whole history, without omitting the least circumstance. The king wept, and the afflicted queen, who had quitted the cauldron, the bones, and the dogs, approached gently, weeping for joy and love for her husband and her children; for could she doubt the truth of this statement, when she perceived all the tokens by which they could be recognised? The three princes and Belle-Etoile rose up at the end of their history, they threw themselves at the king's feet—they embraced his knees, they kissed his hands; he stretched out his arms to them, he pressed them to his heart; there was nothing heard but sighs and exclamations of joy. The king arose, and seeing the queen, his wife, standing timidly close to the wall, in a most humble posture, ran to her, and bestowing on her a thousand caresses, placed a chair for her himself close to his, and made her sit down in it.

Her children kissed her hands and feet a thousand times; never had there been a more tender and touching sight; every one wept and raised their hands and eyes to heaven, to return thanks for having permitted such important circumstances to be brought to light. The king thanked the princess, who had intended to marry him, and presented her with a large quantity of jewels. But for the queen-mother, the admiral's wife, and Feintise, what could he not have done to them, if he had only been counselled by his indignation! The tempest of his rage began to lower, when the generous queen, his children, and Cheri intreated him to be appeased, and to inflict a judgment upon them more for the sake of example than severity: he imprisoned the queen-mother in a tower, but for the admiral's wife and Feintise, they threw them together into a dark, loathsome dungeon, where they fed with the three dogs called Chagrin, Mouron, and Douleur; and as they no longer saw their good mistress, they bit those they were with every instant. In this dungeon they ended their days, which were sufficiently protracted to give them time to repent of all their crimes.

As soon as the queen-mother, the admiral's wife, and Feintise, were led away to the several places appointed for them by the king, the musicians began to sing and to play. The joy was unequalled; Belle-Etoile and Cheri felt more than everybody besides; they knew they were on the eve of being made happy. In short, the king, who thought his nephew the handsomest and most accomplished man at court, told him he could not let such a grand day pass without a wedding, and that he presented him with his daughter. The prince, transported with joy, threw himself at his feet, and Belle-Etoile was equally delighted.

It was but just that the old princess, who had lived in solitude for so many years

should quit it to partake of the public rejoicing. The same little fairy, who came to dine with her, and whom she received so well, entered suddenly to relate to her all that had passed at court. "Let us go there," continued she, "I will inform you as we go along of the care I have taken of your family." The grateful princess ascended the fairy's chariot, which was brilliant with gold and azure, and preceded by a military band, and followed by a hundred body guards, consisting of the first noblemen in the kingdom. The fairy related to the princess the history of her grandchildren, and told her she had never forsaken them; that under the form of a siren, of a turtle-dove, in short, in a thousand various ways, she had protected them. "You see," said she, "a good action always meets return."

The good princess kept incessantly kissing her hand, to show her gratitude, and knew not in what terms to express the extent of her joy. At length they arrived at the palace. The king received them with a thousand expressions of friendship. The Princess Blondine and the beautiful children were eager (as might be expected) to testify their love for this illustrious lady; and when they knew what the fairy had done for them, and that she was the kind dove who had guided them, they could not find words to thank her. To add to the king's satisfaction, she told him, that his mother-in-law, whom he had always considered to be a poor peasant, was born a sovereign princess. It was perhaps the only thing wanting to complete the happiness of this monarch. The fête was finished by the marriage of Belle-Etoile with Prince Cheri. The corsair and his wife were sent for, that they might be still further rewarded for the admirable education they had given the beautiful children. And, to conclude, after having suffered years of trouble and anxiety, everybody was made perfectly happy.

"Love, mighty love! let not the cen or frown,
The origin is often of renown.
What can like love the youthful breast inspire,
Danger to scorn, or honour to desire?
'Tis he who filled the world with Cheri's name,
And prompted him to deeds of deathless fame.
When once for woman truly sighs the heart,
E'en her caprices man must needs obey:
And backward from no precipice will start
If o'er it love, to glory, point the way."

## Eau Claire State Teachers College

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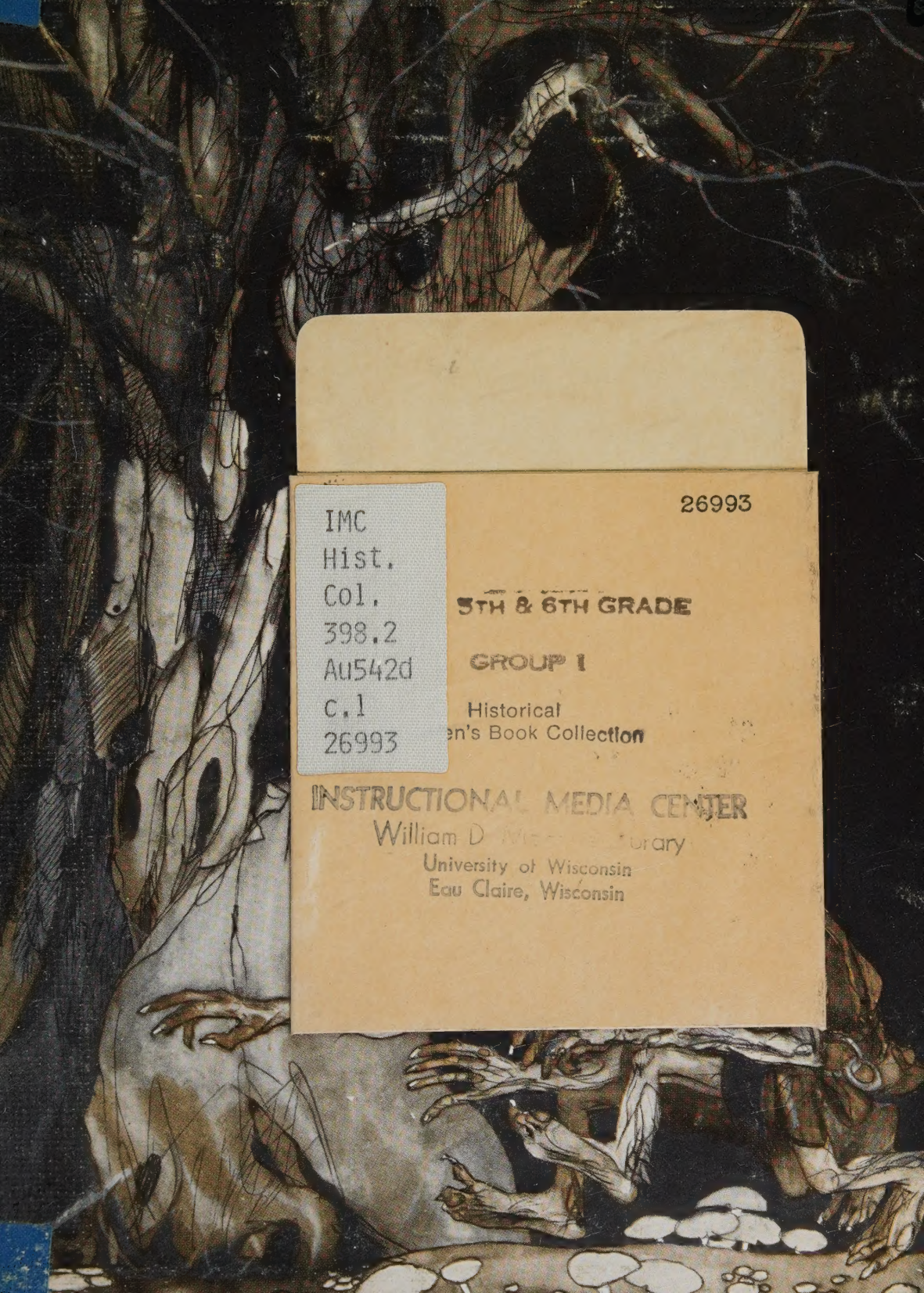

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